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Arab unity

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UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC U.A.

LEBANON SYRIAN REGION

The ARAB UNION

MEDITERRANEAN 4

LIBYA

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**Arab Countries under foreign
mandate or protectorate, or
occupied by foreign troops.**

Arab Unity

FAYEZ A. SAYEGH, Ph.D.

Arab Unity

*HOPE AND
FULFILLMENT*

THE DEVIN-ADAIR COMPANY • NEW YORK • 1958

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PREFACE

As an Arab, I am convinced that sympathetic understanding by Americans of the aspirations of my people, their accomplishments, and their shortcomings, is salutary. I trust that it is not too impertinent of me to say that I am equally convinced that such understanding will not be entirely unrewarding to America as well.

I have endeavored to articulate the feelings of my countrymen and to state and interpret their persuasions with complete candor. I have not hesitated to be critical where I felt that criticism was justified. If I have sinned, it has been in the direction of harshness.

In seeking to mirror faithfully, without embellishment but also without apology, the Arab scene, and to portray its homely no less than its graceful features, I have been animated by my faith that only in truth can understanding obtain.

I wish to express my gratitude to the American Friends of the Middle East, Inc., whose Board of Directors granted me, in January, 1954, a research fellowship for the purpose of enabling me to present to the American reader an account of some salient aspect of the current evolution of the Middle East. In particular, I wish to thank my friend, Garland Evans Hopkins, then-Executive Director of A.F.M.E., for his role in making that grant possible. Not only did the Board of Directors of A.F.M.E. tolerantly

put up with my frequent postponements under the pressure of other commitments, but it left the choice of subject entirely to me.

In the spring of this year, when my personal situation permitted me to devote some of my time to the writing of this book, it seemed appropriate to select Arab unity as my topic. For, of all facets of change in the Middle East, the successive unifications of some Arab states in February 1958 appeared to be the most drastic. It also appeared that these unifications heralded a new stage in the political evolution of the Arab World, the consequences of which would continue to unfold themselves perhaps for years to come, and the impact of which would significantly affect the future history of the Arab World. And it seemed that, perhaps more than any other aspect of Arab life, the pursuit and attainment of Arab unity was a subject of misinterpretation and misrepresentation in the United States.

Neither the theme of this book, however, nor any of the assertions made in the following pages, least of all the personal opinions I have expressed, necessarily reflect or in any other way represent the views of the Board of Directors of A.F.M.E. or of any of its members. For the opinions I have expressed, and for any factual errors I may have inadvertently committed, I alone am responsible.

New York
June 1, 1958

F. A. S.

POSTSCRIPT

The Iraqi *coup d'état* of July 14, 1958, and subsequent developments resulting from foreign intervention in Arab affairs and the landing of foreign troops on Arab soil, have opened a new chapter in the story of Arab nationalism in general and Arab unity in particular.

The manuscript of this book had been completed and handed to the printer on June 1, 1958. The actual course of events after that date, therefore, is not described in the present book.

But both the Iraqi *coup d'état* and the subsequent intervention of foreign Powers in Arab affairs were anticipated in the pages of the book. Upon re-reading the relevant sections, I have felt that I would not have written them differently had I written the book after July 14; and I have reached the conclusion that it was not necessary for me to make changes of any kind in the text. Analysis of the post-June events must be made in the future to supplement the analysis, contained in the book, of Arab events up to June 1958; but no change in the present text is called for. In fact, the reader will find in the book as it now stands the background of the events of mid-July; I refer particularly to Chapter XI, the first part of Chapter XIV, and the later portions of the Conclusion.

New York
July 19, 1958

F. A. S.

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INTRODUCTION

A FATEFUL MONTH FEBRUARY, 1958

THE month of February, 1958, is a prominent landmark in modern Arab history; and it will live in the memory of future Arab generations as a turning-point in the accelerated process of fulfillment of Arab national aspirations.

At the opening of the month, the former Republics of Egypt and Syria made a mutual surrender of their respective sovereignties, and merged into a new political entity—the *United Arab Republic*—transcending their former separateness and erasing their distinct identities. In the middle of the month, the Kingdoms of Iraq and Jordan entered into a federal relationship, within which many of the prerogatives of sovereignty and the responsibilities of government were delegated to the new federal institutions of the *Arab Union* then founded. Shortly thereafter, the Kingdom of Yemen associated itself federally with the United Arab Republic; and the *United Arab States* came into being.

Thus, in the span of one month, the destiny, the political iden-

tity, and indeed the very existence of five Arab States underwent far-reaching change. These events and arrangements altered the political geography of the Middle East and radically challenged the political *status quo* in the Arab World.

* * *

Viewed purely as *manifestations of change* in an existing situation, these events appear to be momentous and historic indeed. Seldom in recent Arab history have so many events, embodying such profound changes, occurred so rapidly and in so brief a period. Not since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire as a result of the First World War, has one month or perhaps one year given birth to so many far-reaching changes in Arab life and fortunes. Arab society has not experienced such a dense concentration of history—has not lived so historically—since the cataclysmic events of the First World War, as it did in the fateful month of February, 1958.

Merely to detect *change as such*, however, is to fail to grasp the profound meaning of the events of February, 1958. Nor is the greater import of these events revealed on the quantitative dimension. The rapid succession in which these events unfolded themselves, the brief period in which they occurred, the number of states involved in them—these coefficients yield at best a purely quantitative formula for assessing the magnitude of outward change; the deeper significance of the events in question will continue to elude those who confine their vision to the apparent and measurable. The factor which is preeminently decisive in determining the historic importance of these events pertains to the *quality of the changes* they produced. Beyond the change in structures and the creation of new political entities, lies the change in the *traditional patterns of change*: new forces have taken the helm; it is they that now shape and reshape Arab society.

For the first time in centuries, *Arab forces* have now appeared

on the stage of Arab life ready and able to remake Arab history. For the first time in many centuries, Arab leadership has asserted itself as the principal actor on the stage of Arab life, abandoning alike the observer's seat and the spectatorial role formerly assigned to it. No longer is Arab society content with reciting a script written by someone else, or with suffering meekly during a performance, supposedly its own but actually designed neither for its enjoyment nor for its edification. At long last, the Arabs have now emerged, in their own homeland, as the makers of their own history.

But this is only one aspect of the deeper significance of the events of February, 1958. Another facet, closely related, pertains to the direction in which the recently-recaptured initiative points, and the goals which it seeks to attain. *Unity*, as a direction of movement and as a goal for achievement, has exercised an increasingly intense appeal to the Arab mind and heart, and has in recent years become a national *mystique*. The significance of the unification of some Arab States in February, 1958, therefore, lies not merely in the fact that it was accomplished through Arab leadership and at its initiative, but also in the fact that it was *in direct response to the desire of the Arab peoples*, in implementation of their collective wish, and in pursuit of what they consider a vital national interest: unity.



The events of February, 1958, were not self-generated events. They were not the beginning of a historical process. Nor are they the culmination of a trend, the terminus of a journey. Even though they constitute a prominent landmark in modern Arab history, they are merely a milestone in the process of attaining Arab unity, a step in a process. Many antecedent steps have made them possible; and they, in turn, pave the way for other steps in the same direction in the future.

In order to understand the meaning and assess the historical

significance of these events, we must tell the whole story of Arab unity. We must, unto that end, examine the *subjective* nature of the idea of Arab unity, seeking the causes of the Arab urge for unity and the explanation for the intensity of its emotional appeal. We must also examine the *objective* grounds of the idea of Arab unity, inquiring into the nationhood of the Arabs. And we must trace the *historical process* of Arab unification in modern times, and examine the manner in which the idea of Arab unity has so far translated itself, in several successive steps, into partially-attained reality.

* * *

The story of Arab unity is one of interaction between *idea* and *history*. Arab history has influenced the evolution of the idea of Arab unity; and the idea, in turn, has helped shape Arab history in recent decades. Therefore, neither a purely ideological analysis of Arab unity without reference to historical developments, nor a purely narrative chronicle of recent changes in Arab fortunes in abstraction from the role of the idea of Arab unity, can yield an intelligible recital of the progress of the Arab World towards political unity. Much less can a one-sided historical or ideological approach provide adequate interpretation, whether of accomplishment or of failure in the endeavor of the Arabs to attain political unity. Only an *ideo-historical* approach can produce an intelligently interpretative description of the recent evolution of the Arabs towards political solidarity. Hence the examination of Arab unity, in this book, as both idea and reality—*hope and fulfillment*.

* * *

In its genesis, evolution, and partial accomplishment, the idea of Arab unity has been but one of the principal ideas animating Arab nationalism. The pursuit of unity has been but one mani-

festation of the Arab national movement. Our study of Arab unity, therefore, must view this goal from the perspective of Arab national aspirations as an organic whole, and not in artificial isolation from the other cognate objectives of Arab nationalism.

* * *

An ideo-historical survey of Arab unity within the context of Arab nationalism, such as we are now undertaking, will also shed some light upon what seems to be a reversal of the trend towards Arab unity.

The events of February, 1958, did not produce one greater Arab union from the merger of smaller units; they brought forth two unions. Why is it, then, that, in marching towards Arab unity, the Arabs have chosen two separate paths instead of one? Does this not mean that, in moving in the direction of greater unity, the Arab states have also moved in the direction of greater disunity? Were not the Arab countries, perhaps, closer to unity when they coexisted as sovereign states within the Arab League, than they are now, when the political differences of former days have crystallized and solidified, generating two clear-cut and tightly-knit units? Is not the rigid bipolarization of today more divisive, more disruptive of Arab solidarity, and therefore more detrimental to Arab unity, than were the loose associations of yesterday—when such affinities or differences as existed among the Arab states were more partial, intra-Arab groupings more flexible, and the entire situation more fluid?

These questions, too, must be examined, in the light of the ideological character and historical development of the Arab national movement.

PART ONE

**THE BACKGROUND
OF ARAB UNITY**

MODERN BEGINNINGS OF THE IDEA OF ARAB UNITY

1

THE modern revival of the Arab peoples, which has come to be known as the "Arab awakening," had its desultory and somewhat hesitant beginnings in different centers of Arab society, and at different times, during the Nineteenth Century.

At the outset, this revival assumed the form of a set of discontinuous and somewhat unrelated phenomena, rather than a continuous and centralized movement. The diverse movements in which the Arab revival manifested itself were initially neither uniform in character nor identical in inspiration, motivation and aspiration.

In the Arabian Peninsula, Arab revival took the form of religious puritanism.

In Egypt, it expressed itself as a movement for liberation from Ottoman domination, for the founding of a nation-state in the modern European sense, and for socio-economic modernization.

In the Fertile Crescent,¹ it was mainly a cultural, literary and intellectual renaissance, drawing its sources from the classical Arabic civilization, then recently discovered, and from the modern Western traditions of science, technology and literature, then recently rendered accessible to that sector of Arab society.

* * *

The variations in the primary characters of these movements corresponded to the initial events and circumstances which respectively stirred and inspired them.

The Wahhabi movement in the Arabian Peninsula was purely indigenous in leadership and Muslim in character. It was animated by the universal puritan impulse which, inhabiting the heart of man as man and comprising an essential ingredient of the religious experience as such, has asserted itself at various times within diverse religious traditions.

The Egyptian revival, emphasizing political liberation and socio-economic modernization, was ignited by the Napoleonic invasion of 1798 and the simultaneous demonstration of the vulnerability of the Ottoman Empire; by the scientific, cultural, and technological missions which accompanied Napoleon; and by the character of Muhammad Ali, who emerged from the confusion of the day as the savior of Egypt from Napoleon as well as from the Mamluks and the Ottoman Sultan.

On the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, however, it was the educational, philanthropic, and religious missions, from Europe and the United States, that stimulated the intellectual rebirth of Arab society.

* * *

¹ The "Fertile Crescent" is used in this book to indicate the Arab territory bounded by the Mediterranean in the west, the Arabian Peninsula in the south, Iran in the east, and Turkey in the north. Internally, it is divided into two sectors. Its eastern sector is the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates, historically known as Mesopotamia and currently known as Iraq. The western sector is geographical Syria, which in turn comprises the political entities which came to be known, after the First World War, as Palestine, Transjordan, the Republic of Lebanon and the Republic of Syria proper.

Diverse as their origins and essential characters were, these movements, and others of a less abiding nature, eventually converged upon one another; and, as tributaries, contributed to the main stream of the Arab awakening. After the end of the First World War, new historical circumstances rendered the convergence of these movements more lasting, and combined their forces to generate the Arab national movement in its present form—a movement at once nationalistic in impulse and pan-Arab in range.² It is true that some of the earlier differences in accent continued for some time after the convergence of the different movements of Arab revival to characterize the tone of the articulation of the national aspirations in different sectors of the Arab World. It is true, too, that former preoccupation with objectives of local and provincial concern persisted, and even received additional impetus from the dismemberment of the Fertile Crescent after the First World War. It is also true that the emergence of political thinking in Arab society gave rise here and there to theories of separate nationhood (particularly among some Egyptian and Syrian thinkers) as distinct from Arab nationhood. Nevertheless, the Arab awakening came to be, after the First World War, largely nationalistic in character and pan-Arab in range. The concept of Arab unity was an integral component of the movement which was thus transformed.

2

The Arab national movement came into being, after the First World War, in consequence of the amalgamation of the diverse revivals experienced in different centers of Arab society in the Nineteenth Century.

As it came into its own, the Arab national movement was animated by three kindred urges: for emancipation from foreign domination, for socio-economic development, and for political unification. The corresponding ideas of independence, progress

² See *below*, Chapter VI, Section 3.

and unity jointly became the principal components of the total concept of Arab nationalism.

These three urges and ideas represent the three dimensions of Arab existence and the three levels of relationship: viz. the relations between Arab society and the outside world, the relations of Arab society with the existing Arab patterns of socio-economic organization, and the relations among the various political sectors of Arab society.

The pursuit of these three cardinal objectives of Arab nationalism was a natural, spontaneous response, in each case, to a corresponding lack suffered by Arab society, or a reaction to a corresponding privation inflicted on the Arabs by the outside world. The aspiration for independence reflected the rejection by the Arabs of the sway of the will and interests of others over Arab fortunes and resources. The aspiration for development and self-betterment betokened the awakening consciousness by Arabs of the backwardness of Arab life, in consequence of centuries of slumber under the suffocating rule of the Ottoman Empire, and the determination of Arabs to initiate a process of socio-economic-political development—giving expression to their inherent creative potencies, advancing their legitimate interests, and narrowing the gap separating Arab life from the life of the more advanced nations in the contemporary world or from the attainments of their predecessors in past periods of Arab greatness. Similarly, the aspiration for unity echoed the refusal of Arabs to acquiesce in the political fragmentation of Arab society wrought by foreign Powers in the Nineteenth Century and the first quarter of the Twentieth, and the Arab determination to restore normality to an artificial Arab situation of political dismemberment arbitrarily inflicted upon Arabs by others. All three aspirations—for emancipation, for self-betterment, and for political unity—were cognate manifestations of a natural longing for health and normality by a nation which had been subjected to enfeebling conditions of abnormality. Arab nationalism was the longing of a nation for natural rights of which it had been

deprived; it was the Arab response to the unsalutary vicissitudes of modern Arab history. It sought what Arabs had been denied, or those rights of which they had been divested.

It was not by virtue of a conscious and deliberate act of selection, in abstraction from concrete experience, that the Arab national movement chose these three goals of self-determination, self-betterment and unity for its prime objectives. It was, rather, in response to their historical experiences and contemporary conditions that Arabs focused their attention on these goals.

The human desire for freedom, progress and cohesion is spontaneous and natural, and the longing for these values is universal. Arab nationalism, then, is the spontaneous expression of a natural longing for universally-cherished values, within the peculiarities of a concrete national context and in response to specific historical experiences and challenges. Its substance is universally human; its specific form, the timing of its actions, and the pattern of its evolution are peculiar to the Arab situation and relative to the conditions of Arab existence.

Accordingly, while it has been animated by these three aspirations since its inception, Arab nationalism has nevertheless alternated, at different stages of its evolution, between laying primary emphasis on one or the other of its three cognate, cardinal objectives.

It is the pursuit of Arab unity—as one of the three principal manifestations of Arab nationalism—that concerns us in the present study.

3

The idea of Arab unity was in fact *implicit* in the total concept of the Arab awakening, even before the First World War, at least as far as the stirrings of revival in the Fertile Crescent were concerned.

That the idea of Arab unity was only implicitly, and as it were potentially, present in the thoughts and aspirations of the leaders of the Arab revival at that initial stage may be attributed to

two factors. First, the movement was primarily cultural, and not political; and, therefore, political-nationalist themes were only infrequently articulated. Secondly, as far as the areas in which the movement was taking shape were concerned, political and administrative unity was already a reality under Ottoman rule; and therefore it was generally taken for granted. Owing to these two factors, the concept of Arab unity was only implicit, and the impulse for unification was only potentially present, in the awakening of the Arab peoples of the Fertile Crescent before the First World War.

But that the idea of Arab unity was nevertheless present and real, at that formative stage of the movement, is evident from the very nature of its postulates and objectives. The discovery of classical Arabic culture was the major stimulus for the Arab awakening. The dissemination of classical works of Arabic literature, made possible by the advent of the modern printing-press into the Arab East and by the rapid rise in the number of literate Arabs as a result of the new schools, was a principal channel of the movement. The classical Arabic language became once more—as it had been during the earlier period of “arabization”³ a millennium before—an instrument of cultural communion and national cohesion, as well as a mark of identification of the peoples characterized by its use, distinguishing them and setting them apart from other peoples. The foundations of the Nineteenth Century movement, then—the Arabic culture of the past and the classical Arabic language—were *unifying* elements. They were indifferent to, and transcendent of, local characteristics and provincial preoccupations. As legacies of the past, they were the collective heritage of all Arabs—in the creation of which the peoples of all Arab lands had taken an active part; in the resurrection of which all Arab peoples could participate; and in the glories of which all Arabs alike could take pride. The message of their culture and language was universal to all Arabs; their scope was pan-Arab; the call for their enjoyment, for their resurrec-

³ See *below*, Chapter II, Section 2.

tion, and for the re-creation of a new Arab culture, which was the distinctive message of that movement at that time, transcended local barriers and went to all Arabs. In short, *the idea of Arab unity was not the less real and present in the Nineteenth Century awakening of the Arabs of the Fertile Crescent because it was not conceptually formulated or explicitly articulated.*

Even the Egyptian movement of liberation and modernization of the Nineteenth Century did not lack elements which pointed beyond Egypt. For it had a potential appeal to all Arab subjects of the Ottoman Empire—which, in the early years of the Nineteenth Century, meant almost all Arabs. Moreover, the exclusive preoccupation of this movement with Egyptian affairs was mitigated by the campaigns of Muhammad Ali beyond the borders of Egypt—in the Arabian Peninsula, in the Sudan, and in Syria; and the limited horizons of the nationalist thinking were expanded, later in the century, when Arab nationalists from the Fertile Crescent sought refuge in Egypt from the despotism of Abdul Hamid, and came to play a significant role in the journalism and in the intellectual life of Egypt.



Notwithstanding the *implicit, inarticulate* and *potential* presence—in different forms and to different degrees—of the idea of Arab unity in the Arab stirrings of the Nineteenth Century in the Fertile Crescent and in Egypt, it was not until after the First World War that these separate movements merged into one, and their distinct emphases came to be generally subordinated to the pan-Arab theme—with its articulate and passionate call for unity. In the meantime, however, and until the First World War, the nationalist movement in the Arab World continued to be bifurcated into a more or less Egyptian-oriented, political movement of national liberation, on the one hand, and a more or less pan-Arab cultural movement, less political in nature and less

concerned with immediate national liberation, on the other hand.

The causes of the metamorphosis of the Arab awakening after the First World War, and the course of the emerging Arab national movement, will be examined and traced in subsequent chapters. In the meantime, we must retrace our steps, and examine the meaning of the label "Arab" which we have so far applied to the peoples of the area, and the derivative designation of the area as "the Arab World."

THE "ARABS" AND THE "ARAB WORLD"

1

THE area known as the "Arab World" extends from the Atlantic Coast in North Africa to the Persian Gulf in Asia—stretching continuously and without break¹ along the southern shores of the Mediterranean in Africa and the eastern Mediterranean shorelands in Asia, and bulging in the latter sector to embrace all of Mesopotamia as well as the peninsular sub-continent enclosed between the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf.

The appellation, "Arab," in terms of which the peoples of these lands are identified, derives from the stamp imprinted on

¹ In 1948, the southern sector of the eastern Mediterranean shoreland was occupied by the forces of Israel, and the bulk of the population, about one million, was displaced. In the ensuing years, about one million persons were brought by the Israeli authorities into the territory under their control, and settled on the land forcibly vacated by the displaced inhabitants. These events have produced a *break*, under present circumstances, in the demographic continuum which is here defined.

the life of the entire area following the occupation thereof by Muslim-Arabs from the Arabian Peninsula in the Seventh Century A.D.

Although the intimate and permanent association between the Arabian Peninsula and the remainder of the Arab World is only thirteen centuries old, however, continuous demographic association between the two regions goes back to the dawn of history. For the past five thousand years, indeed, the Arabian Peninsula has served as the main human reservoir, whence the population of the rest of the Arab World largely came.

Many of the earlier stocks which inhabited the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean—and which flourished, successively or contemporaneously, building civilizations and kingdoms of their own at a time when the history of mankind virtually revolved around them—were originally inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula who left it in successive waves during the Third and Second Millennia B.C. and proceeded northwards and westwards to the more fertile lands, there to appear on the stage of history under different names—Babylonians, Canaanites, Phoenicians, Aramaeans, Hebrews, Chaldaeans, or Assyrians. The early history of the Near East, which is also the early history of human civilization itself, is virtually the story of the encounter between immigrants from the Arabian Peninsula, on the one hand, and existing Near Eastern populations and immigrants from the north, on the other hand.

* * *

By the *Fourth Millennium B.C.*, highly developed forms of social life had evolved in Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia.² From the *Third Millennium B.C.* onwards, swarms of peoples pushed

² In this historical survey, the term *Syria* is applied to the area which includes the political entities which came to be known, after the First World War, as Transjordan, Palestine, Lebanon, as well as the Republic of Syria. *Mesopotamia* is the equivalent of Iraq. Syria and Mesopotamia jointly are referred to as the *Fertile Crescent*.

into these lands from the Arabian Peninsula, probably under the pressure of acute periods of drought. In the *Third Millennium B.C.* came the Babylonians, Canaanites, and Phoenicians. In the *Second Millennium B.C.*, there were, in addition to new migrations from the Peninsula by the Aramaeans and Hebrews, incursions from the north by such pastoral peoples as the Hyksos and the Hittites. In the *First Millennium B.C.* came the first wave of another Semitic group, the Arabs, who in the meantime had predominated in the Peninsula.

As early as the Eighth Century B.C., an Arab tribe had established itself in the Kingdom of the Aribis, with its capital in the Jawf. During the Hellenistic period, the Arab Nabatean state sprang up; it survived until Roman days, and was followed by the Arab Palmyrene Kingdom which, in the Third Century A.D., extended its rule over the whole of Syria. In the Sixth Century A.D., Ghassanid and Lakhmid Arab dynasties flourished in Syria and Mesopotamia respectively. All these Arab migrations and settlements were forerunners of the great Muslim-Arab Conquests of the Seventh Century A.D. And it was those early migrations, first by diverse Semitic peoples and later on by Semitic Arabs, that contributed to the creation of the numerous communities whose civilizations and cultures, wars and trade, kingdoms and city-states formed the substance of the early history of civilized mankind.

Thus, from the Arabian Peninsula came the fibre of the human substratum on which multiform political structures were built, and from which successive civilizations sprang up. Even when indigenous states succumbed to the onslaughts of empires from outside, and when, from the Sixth Century B.C. onwards, the area was to become the prized possession first of one empire and then of another, appearing in history as part of the Persian, Macedonian, Roman or Byzantine Empires, or alternatively under the rule of one or more splinter-dynasties—the population of the area persisted, as the underlying human substratum. It was the amalgam of countless racial groups which had mingled

with one another and with the successive conquerors over the centuries beyond recognition as separate and distinct ethnic entities. And this persisting human amalgam was destined to be constantly revitalized from time to time by fresh migrations from the fecund Peninsula. Every new people that entered the area mingled and merged with the existing populations, themselves also the resultant of long processes of mutual absorption. One after the other, the various ethnic stocks ceased to exist as such, their original racial purity and cultural or linguistic distinctiveness vanishing in the endless process of mingling and assimilation. Every fresh migration eventually lost its separate identity, and from the perennial process of amalgamation in that history-laden crucible there emerged a human compound—not a mere mixture—which persisted despite the rise and fall of empires.

2

The advent of one more immigration from the Arabian Peninsula, in the Seventh Century A.D., was, therefore, in a sense, but a continuation or perhaps a resumption of a history-old process of immigration, occupation and eventual absorption. In a sense, it was just another ethnic group, belonging to the same generic ethnic family to which many a previous immigrant group had belonged, and coming from the same Peninsula from which many a previous group had come—pouring into the same melting-pot into which all others had poured, and destined sooner or later to mingle with the rest and to lose its distinctive identity, as they too had lost their identities, beyond recognition as such.

But that is only part of the truth. For there were basic differences between the Seventh Century A.D. migration of the Muslim-Arabs and previous migrations by diverse Semitic (including Arab) tribes in the preceding millennia. And the differentiating features of the new wave of immigration brought forth unprecedented results: the new immigrants succeeded in trans-

forming—permanently and essentially—the cultural, linguistic and ethnic character of the population of the area. A prominent historian of the Near East observes:

"The Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Chaldaeans, the Phoenicians—all of whose ancestors were nurtured in the Arabian peninsula—were, but are no more. The Arabs were and remain."³

To the extent to which this remark dramatizes the fundamental and permanent transformation of the character of the early Near Eastern peoples as a result of the Muslim-Arab invasions of the Seventh Century A.D., and refers to the *arabization* of the population of the southern and eastern shorelands of the Mediterranean, it embodies an accurate reading of the history of the Near East. But it is perhaps an over-simplification of the intricate historical processes which were in motion before, during and after the Muslim-Arab invasions to assert that the earlier ethnic groups "were, but are no more" while the Arabs "were and remain." The process of mutual absorption—ethnic and cultural—continued after the invasions of the Seventh Century A.D. Intermingling with the earlier populations—who were already an amalgam of aboriginal Near Eastern peoples, immigrants from the north and east, residues of imperial settlers, and, above all, diverse Semitic (including Arab) groups—the Muslim-Arab immigrants who conquered the area submitted to the perennial operation of mutual absorption in the Near Eastern melting-pot. They, too, lost their exclusive and distinctive identity in the process, as the others had in the past. As such, they, too, "are no more," in the same way in which preceding groups "were, but are no more." Their separateness passed away in a relatively short time; they survived the process of amalgamation, as the preceding groups also had survived the earlier phases of the same process, not in their original racial purity but as indistinguishable components of the resultant demographic compound. The culture which was subsequently created under their aegis

³ Hitti, Philip K., *The Arabs: A Short History*, Regnery, Chicago, 1956, p. 1.

was created by the amalgamated population as a whole, and owed many of its essential ingredients to pre-existing cultures.

On the other hand, the stamp which was in due course imprinted on the entire population, and which was destined to prove permanent, persisting until today, came from the Muslim-Arab invaders. For, while ethnically and culturally they underwent mutual absorption with the compound-population they conquered, they nevertheless bequeathed their language and their new faith to the amalgam. Not only the Arabs themselves, then, but all their predecessors as well, who were arabized by them, "were and remain." They remain as arabized peoples, owing their identifying tongue and socio-religious beliefs to the new demographic ingredient which forcefully poured into the Near Eastern melting-pot in the Seventh Century A.D.

In one sense, then, the Muslim-Arab invasions were a resumption of a history-long process of immigration, conquest and mutual absorption which had characterized the history of the Near East since time immemorial. In another sense, these invasions were unique among the countless invasions to which the Near East was subjected, before as well as after the Seventh Century A.D. By virtue of the similarities among the patterns which prevailed before, during, and after the Muslim-Arab invasions, all the human stocks which settled in the Near Eastern area from time immemorial and intermingled with one another have survived in the human compound which is the resultant of their intermixture and which inhabits the area today. On the other hand, by virtue of the unique features of the Muslim-Arab invasions, this compound has been fundamentally stamped by the Arab character and permanently arabized.

Wherein, then, lay the uniqueness of the Muslim-Arab invasions of the Seventh Century A.D.? And of what did the process of arabization, which took place side by side with the process of mutual absorption, consist?

Of the essential features which distinguished the incursions of the Seventh Century A.D. from previous and succeeding incursions, the following appear to be the most significant:

First: The newcomers were fired by a religious zeal which endowed them with a spiritual militancy and moral dynamism theretofore unknown. Islam had just arisen among them; and many of them were motivated by that missionary zeal which is characteristic of religions in their youth or of new converts. Islam was not a tribal or parochial religion; it was a monotheistic and spiritualistic faith with a universal gospel. Nor did it preach a provincial deity capable of appealing only to a particular people; the God it proclaimed was the God already worshipped and preached by Jews and Christians in the conquered areas.

Second: In the few years which had elapsed since its proclamation by its Prophet, the new faith had already unified the Arab tribes in the Peninsula. It was as Arabs, not as this tribe or that, that the invaders came. What unified and distinguished them as Arabs, in addition to their new faith, was their language, which all Arabs understood, and the literary heritage of pre-Islamic Arabia, in which all Arabs took pride.

Third: The spectacular victories won by the Arabs on the battlefield soon widened the territorial scope of the invasions. Within one century, the Muslim-Arab domain came to extend from Spain and the borders of France in the west, to India and the borders of China in the east. Theirs, then, was not a localized settlement, nor a provincial regime. Unlike previous hordes who had come from the Arabian Peninsula, the Muslim-Arabs spread their dominion over the entire region now known as the Arab World, and indeed far beyond it in the west and in the east, and did not confine their occupation and settlement to a small sector. Intermingling was to take place not in a small locality but throughout the area, with the Arabs acting as a homogenizing ingredient in the amalgam which was to spring up in the entire region.

Fourth: Not only was the Muslim-Arab settlement extended

in space over a wide area, but the Muslim-Arab migration was also extended in time. Wave after wave of Arabs was to come from the Arabian Peninsula for many a century after the occupation, reinforcing and constantly enriching the ethnic content which the Arabs initially poured into the demographic crucible.

These features, individually and jointly, distinguished the character—and therefore the impact—of the Muslim-Arab invasions of the Seventh Century A.D., and set them apart from previous tribal migrations.

At the same time, the manner in which the Arab conquerors organized and administered their Empire distinguished their impact from that of preceding and subsequent empires. The many empires under which the Near East, or parts of it, fell at one time or another—from the Persian Empire of the Sixth Century B.C. until the European Empires of the Twentieth Century A.D.—invariably laid upper crusts upon the main body of society, or erected alien political-military superstructures on the human substratum. Not so the Arab Empire. The Arab political system rested upon and grew within the amalgamating human compound. The relationship which obtained between the arabized population and the Arab regime differed fundamentally from the relationship which obtained, at different times, between the Near Eastern peoples and the Persian, Macedonian, Byzantine, Ottoman, British or French imperial regimes.

3

The process of arabization was one of two processes which were set in motion by the Muslim-Arab conquests. The other was the process of islamization. The former was cultural, social, ethnic, but, above all, linguistic; the latter was religious. In nature and implication, arabization was more comprehensive than islamization; in the territorial scope of its effectiveness, the latter extended far beyond the frontiers at which the former was halted. Islamization, as one facet of the more complex process of arabization, was able to operate in isolation from the total

context of arabization; and many peoples were more prepared to adopt Islam as a religion than to undergo the total transformation which arabization necessarily entailed. As George Antonius aptly put it:

"The two processes, islamisation and arabisation, were now at work together, but, although intimately interconnected, were by no means identical. Nor did they halt at the same frontiers. Islamisation, essentially a spiritual force, progressed much further afield and was able to sweep barriers which arabisation, involving material displacement, could not always overstep. Broadly speaking, every country which became permanently arabised became also permanently islamised. But the converse is not true . . .

". . . Thus two worlds, one considerably more extensive than the other, were created: the Moslem world and the Arab world, of which the first contained the second.

"In course of time, the world of Islam reached out to India, China and the western-most recesses of Africa; whereas the Arab world remained confined to those countries in which the process of arabisation had progressed so far and so deep as to have achieved three lasting results: the enthronement of Arabic as the national language, the introduction of Arab manners and ways of thought, and the implantation of an appreciable Arab stock in the racial soil."⁴

* * *

It is the process of arabization which primarily concerns us in this survey—the process which has transformed the entire area now known as the Arab World into what it is today, in terms of culture, language, and ethnic and national character.

For this arabization persisted long after the Arab political structures had passed away, and survived the Arab caliphate and kingdoms. As Professor Bernard Lewis wrote:

"It was the Aribisation of the conquered provinces rather than their military conquest that is the true wonder of Arab expansion.

⁴ Antonius, George, *The Arab Awakening*, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1946, pp. 15-18.

By the eleventh century Arabic had become not only the chief idiom of everyday use from Persia to the Pyrenees, but also the chief instrument of culture, superseding old culture languages like Coptic, Aramaic, Greek and Latin. As the Arabic language spread, the distinction between Arab conqueror and Arabised conquered faded into relative insignificance."⁵

The implanting of the Arabic language into the life of the conquered populations, and their resultant arabization, had a wider cultural and social effect than the mere adoption of a foreign tongue ordinarily entails. For, as Professor Lewis indicates, "the survival and expansion of Arabic meant more than the language itself—more, for example, than the continued use of Latin in the mediaeval West. With the language came Arab taste and tradition in the choice and treatment of themes."⁶ And also "with the language of the Arabs came their poetry as its classical model and the world of ideas embedded therein."⁷ It was because of this that arabization survived the period of Arab rule, and the Arabic language "remained the sole instrument of culture for long after the fall of the purely Arab kingdom."⁸

* * *

The afore-mentioned features of the Muslim-Arab invasions of the Seventh Century A.D., and the fundamental linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and religious transformation in the character of the Near Eastern peoples which ensued, render the said invasions a decisive landmark in the long history of the Near East. The perennial and inevitable process of amalgamation and mutual absorption continued to unfold itself, indeed, after these invasions, as it had done before. But the pattern was new. Instead of the Arab immigrants becoming eventually syrianized, mesopotamianized, or egyptianized—as previous immigrants had

⁵ Lewis, Bernard, *The Arabs in History*, Hutchinson's University Library, London, 1950; p. 132.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 133. ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 132. ⁸ *Ibid.*

become—the existing populations of the conquered areas were arabized. The Arabs did not erase or otherwise supersede the pre-existing populations; they too, like previous invaders and immigrants, were assimilated with the existing peoples in the human compound. But, in the process, the Arabs left their indelible mark upon the resultant amalgam, in which victor and vanquished equally lost their separate identities. And it is this Arab mark which has continued to characterize and identify the populations of what then became, and has since remained, the "Arab" World.

The arabization of the area has proved permanent and lasting throughout the centuries. It has persisted even though Arab political structures splintered and collapsed; even though crusaders from Europe and barbaric hordes from Asia nibbled successively at the arabized lands and subjected them to piecemeal occupation and to plunder; and even though, when they were thus weakened by internal dissension, partial foreign domination, and barbaric destruction, the various provincial Arab regimes eventually succumbed to the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth Century A.D. For, as Edward Atiyah observed:

"... Though Ottoman rule was generally sterile in that it imparted no new cultural values or creative impulses to the Arab world, and though it was often harsh and destructive of the sources of wealth in it, it did not impinge on the Arabism of its people, so that when they began, three and a half centuries later, to awaken to a new life, it was as Arabs that they did so."⁹

⁹ Atiyah, Edward, *The Arabs*, Penguin, 1955, pp. 47-48.

THE STEEP DESCENT TO THE ABYSS OF DISUNITY

1

SELF-MASTERY, enjoyed by the peoples who had undergone the process of arabization since the Seventh Century A.D., was terminated by the Ottomans in the Sixteenth Century. In the intervening nine centuries, Arab structures of self-rule, whether central or provincial, had suffered progressive weakening, first as a result of internal dissension and dynastic splintering, and, later on, by successive onslaughts from without. With the triumph of the Ottoman Turks over the Egypto-Syrian Mamluks in 1516 and 1517, the road was open for the Ottomans to subjugate virtually all Arabs.

By the middle of the Sixteenth Century, the Ottomans had occupied the entire Arab area stretching from the Algerian-Moroccan border in the west to the eastern bounds of Iraq, and from the northern limits of Syria to the southern shores of the Arabian Peninsula. Of all the Arab lands, only Morocco and the Sudan were outside the scope of the imperial domination of the

Ottomans; and only the heartland of the Arabian Peninsula, Najd, was spared direct occupation and rule, having succeeded in remaining under Arab *amirs* (i.e., princes) subject to the overlordship of the Ottoman Sultan.

This situation was destined to continue until the Nineteenth Century, when the North African sector and the fringes of the Arabian Peninsula were detached piecemeal from the Ottoman Empire, largely by gradual occupation of one province after another by European Powers, but partly also by the successful assertion of autonomy by some provincial vassals. The shrinkage of the Arab domains of the Ottoman Empire began in 1798, when Napoleon invaded and briefly occupied Egypt, and continued until the First World War. Thus, of the Arab lands of North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Fertile Crescent, which had remained intact as a continuous part of the Ottoman Empire for 250 years, the first sector in its entirety and the fringes of the second sector were, in the ensuing 115 years, detached from that Empire, and either placed under French, British, Spanish, or Italian rule, or governed by autonomous dynasts. When the Ottoman Empire entered the First World War in 1914, of all its former Arab domains only the Fertile Crescent and portions of the Arabian Peninsula were still under its rule.

Thus, the political unity of the Arab World (apart from Morocco and the Sudan), which had been preserved for two and a half centuries within the framework of the Ottoman Empire, gave way to progressive dismemberment during the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries.

2

There had been, indeed, brief and sporadic moments of independence in one Arab part of the Ottoman Empire or another. But they were neither sustained nor extensive; and were achieved, as a rule, by ambitious vassals acting under the impulse

of personal lust for power, not by national uprisings emanating from the people.

At the turn of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, however, the Ottoman hold over Arab lands was gravely shaken by two events.

The Wahhabi movement, which had started in the mid-Eighteenth Century as a religious revival, had soon come to assume a militant political character as well, when its religious leader, Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhab, allied himself with a political chieftain of the House of Saud. After solidifying its power in Central Arabia, during the latter part of the Eighteenth Century, the Saudi-Wahhabi movement made itself felt outside the area of its birth. By 1799, initial excursions brought its forces to the gates of Baghdad; and, between 1801 and 1811, the Saudi-Wahhabis turned their attention to Mecca and Medina, which they occupied, and to Syria, where they threatened Damascus and reached Aleppo.

In the meantime, another challenge to the authority of the Ottoman Sultan appeared in Egypt. Napoleon's occupation of Egypt had been very brief, lasting only from 1798 to 1801. But its consequences were momentous. For Muhammad Ali, the young Albanian officer who had led some two hundred Albanian soldiers into Egypt to participate in its defense against Napoleon, soon emerged as the leader of the only disciplined military force in Egypt. By 1805, he had established himself as the *de facto* ruler of Egypt; and, in the following year, he exacted recognition from the Sultan as Egypt's titular governor.

It is characteristic of the times in which these contemporaneous events occurred that, instead of supplementing each other or even associating themselves with one another, the Saudi-Wahhabi and the Muhammad Ali movements became embroiled in mutual hostility.

In an effort to appease and exploit Muhammad Ali, the Sultan entreated him to proceed to suppress the Saudi-Wahhabi

movement. The ambitious Muhammad Ali did not fail to detect opportunity when it presented itself; and, as soon as he had completed the task of liquidating the remnants of the Mamluks in Egypt in 1811, he turned his attention to Arabia. By 1818 he had succeeded in inflicting a crushing defeat on the Saudi-Wahhabis. Although he did not pursue his victories to the extent of killing their movement or permanently occupying its stronghold in Najd, he nevertheless had successfully discharged the task of removing a threat to the Ottoman Sultan's power in Iraq, Syria and the Hijaz, and in thereby entrenching his own power and establishing his position as well.

The Arabian excursion of Muhammad Ali was destined to become a precedent. After dispatching an expeditionary force to the Sudan, which was conquered in 1820, and to the African and Arabian coasts of the Red Sea, which were also occupied, Muhammad Ali responded to another appeal from the Sultan to assist in subduing yet another insurrection. He dispatched a naval force to Crete in 1822, and occupied the greater part of rebellious Greece. The joint intervention of Britain and Russia in defense of Greece, however, forced the Egyptian forces to retreat in 1827.

The honeymoon between Muhammad Ali and the Sultan did not last very long after the defeat of their forces in Greece. When his demand for the governorship of Syria as a reward for the support he had extended to the Sultan in Greece was rejected, Muhammad Ali proceeded to take Syria by force. This was accomplished in 1832. When Muhammad Ali's rule in Syria came to an end in 1840, it was not through military defeat at the hands of Ottomans but through the effective intervention of the European Powers, spurred into decisive action by Palmerston's Britain.

Although, at the height of his power, Muhammad Ali had wrested from Ottoman rule the heartland of the Arab World—Egypt, the Sudan, Central Arabia and Syria—his, nonetheless,

was not essentially an Arab nationalist movement. National consciousness and nationalist sentiment for independence and unity were still feeble, if not entirely lacking. The groundwork in popular thinking and feeling had yet to be laid.

The process of detaching Arab provinces from the authority of the Sultan, however, had been thus set in motion.

3

Having evacuated Egypt after a three-year occupation, France turned its attention to Arab areas close to home.

First to fall under French occupation was Algeria, the westernmost Arab province of the Ottoman Empire. It fell in 1830—although it was not until 1884 that the initial Algerian resistance movement was suppressed.

Next, the French occupied Tunisia in 1881.

Morocco, which had been ruled by an independent dynasty outside the Ottoman Empire, was now being progressively infiltrated by Spanish and French influences. In 1912, the fate of Morocco, for the time being, was sealed: Spain extended its zone, and France established its rule in the remainder of the country—although it was not until 1924 that France finally succeeded in suppressing the resistance movement.

In Tripolitania, Ottoman rule had been growing increasingly precarious since 1835, when the provincial dynasty was weakened by dissension and the authority of the new appointees of the Sultan came to be widely challenged by discontented rivals. Encouraged by the resultant loss of interest of the Ottomans in the province and emboldened by their growing weakness, and perhaps also inspired by the example of France, Italy invaded Tripolitania in 1911, and obtained recognition from the Sultan for its colonization of Tripoli and Benghazi in 1912. But the Italian occupation of the Libyan hinterland, begun in 1912, was not successfully completed until 1932.

While the Mediterranean European Powers were laying claim to Arab real estate in North Africa, and gaining military control over this sector of the Arab World piece by piece, Britain, mindful of its imperial possessions in the East, was turning its gaze elsewhere. It was busy establishing its hegemony over those Arab lands which were more directly relevant to its maritime trade and imperial communications than the African-Mediterranean shorelands.

In the pre-Suez decades of the Nineteenth Century, Britain acquired the fringes of the Arabian Peninsula. From 1839, when it occupied Aden and dominated the string of principalities adjoining it, onwards, Britain extended its authority piecemeal over the southern and eastern coasts of the Peninsula—resuming the process in the Twentieth Century when Qatar and Kuwait became lucrative for other reasons, after the discovery of oil. While it did not hesitate to use military force to occupy some of the shaikhdoms or sultanates, when it found it necessary so to do, Britain resorted in other principalities to the more expedient and less strenuous stratagem of asserting its authority through concluding “treaties” to that effect with local sultans or shaikhs. Where a chieftain was not too cooperative, it was often possible to help him change his mood into one of “reasonableness” through the timely arrival of units of the Imperial Navy. On other occasions, the promise of annual stipends to subsidize a recalcitrant chieftain proved equally persuasive. Whether by conquest and direct administration, or by indirect control, Britain made certain that the multiform arrangements it made in the Arabian principalities equally served the basic purpose for which they were made: namely, the protection of its imperial, maritime interests in the area.

When the Suez Canal was opened for navigation, however, British control over the southern and eastern coasts of the Arabian Peninsula ceased to be adequate to safeguard British imperial and trade interests in the new maritime-strategic setting revolutionized by Suez. Hence, Britain occupied Egypt in 1882.

From that base, it extended its authority to the Sudan, where the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium was established in 1899.

* * *

Thus the political unity of the Arab World, which was preserved under the Ottomans (with the marginal exceptions of Morocco and the Sudan, and with occasional, brief periods of virtual autonomy exercised here and there) from the mid-Sixteenth Century to the turn of the Nineteenth Century, was broken up, in North Africa and in the southern and eastern coasts of the Arabian Peninsula, during the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. When the First World War broke out, only the Fertile Crescent and portions of the Arabian Peninsula were still united, under Ottoman hegemony.

But even this territorially-small measure of unity still preserved for the Arab World, albeit in only a part of its wider expanse, was destined to be shattered by the end of the War. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire was followed by the introduction of the Multiple-Mandates System. Divisive European regimes replaced the unified Ottoman regime; and even the Arab domains which had remained under Ottoman rule during the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, and had continued to live under one political system, were now fragmented into a mosaic of political entities.

4

The story of the dismemberment of the Fertile Crescent after the First World War—a relatively recent chapter in our narrative—is a story of secret diplomacy, wartime pledges and counter-pledges, and post-War betrayal.

The Arabs of the regions which had remained thus far within the Ottoman Empire were growing restive under Ottoman rule during its last decades. The oppression of Abdul-Hamid and the discriminatory policies systematically pursued by the Young

Turks provided the negative impetus for this restiveness; the cultural awakening among the Arabs, fermenting since the middle of the Nineteenth Century, provided the positive impulse for liberation and self-determination.

The British Government, detecting in these stirrings an ideal source of trouble for the Ottomans (who had joined the Central Powers in the early months of the War), initiated negotiations with the Arabs in 1915, with a view to encouraging them to revolt against their Ottoman rulers. To the Allied Powers, the revolt of the Arabs against the Ottomans promised to serve many of the essential purposes of Allied strategy. It would diminish the anticipated Ottoman military support of the Germans, and perhaps also divert some German forces from the European to the Near Eastern theatre of operations. To the Arabs, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, which would be ensured or at least hastened by Arab insurgence, meant emancipation and self-determination.

The Anglo-Arab negotiations produced complete accord on purposes and virtually complete agreement on the place of the Arabs in the new order then envisaged for the post-War world. The British promised to support and to help fulfill the national aspirations voiced by the Arabs—for freedom in unity—in exchange for the Arabs' rising against the Ottomans.

The Anglo-Arab agreement was reached through, and registered in, the famous exchange of correspondence between Sir Henry McMahon, on behalf of the British Government, and Sharif Husain of Mecca, on behalf of the Arabs.¹ During the negotiations, Husain was in constant contact with the leaders of

¹ Eight letters were exchanged by the two parties between July 14, 1915, and January 30, 1916. (The full texts of these letters may be found in *British White Paper*, Cmd. 5957, 1939; and in Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, *op. cit.*, pp. 413-427.) Two more letters, Nos. 9 and 10, completing the correspondence in March 1916, were also exchanged; but they "dealt only with matters relating to the prosecution of the War" and did not form part of the Anglo-Arab accord on the post-War settlement. (See *Great Britain and Palestine: 1915-1945*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1946, pp. 144-147.)

the Arab nationalist movement in the Fertile Crescent through his son, Faisal; the requests he made and the demands he submitted were often defined or inspired by them, and the agreements he concluded with the British Government bore the stamp of approval of those nationalist leaders.

When the Arabs were satisfied that the British undertakings and pledges provided adequate guarantees that the Arab national aspirations for freedom and unity in the Fertile Crescent and the Arabian Peninsula would be supported and promoted by the Allies after the War, they launched what has been known as the Great Arab Revolt against Ottoman rule, on June 10, 1916.

In the interval between the conclusion of the Anglo-Arab Agreement and the actual launching of the Arab Revolt, and while the Arab forces were being prepared for the insurgence, the British Government initiated (in mid-March, 1916) discussions with the French and the Czarist-Russian Governments concerning the post-War future of the Ottoman Empire, and the division of Ottoman dominions among the three Allied Powers. The resultant Anglo-Franco-Russian Agreement was expressed in the form of diplomatic notes exchanged by the three Governments in April and May, 1916. The notes defining the British and French shares in the *Arab* territories of the Ottoman Empire² (commonly known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement) were exchanged in London on May 9 and 16, 1916—i.e., more than three months after the Anglo-Arab accord had taken final shape.

Under the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which differed in spirit and content from the agreement previously concluded between Britain and the Arabs, the Fertile Crescent was to be divided into six distinct areas. In the interior of Syria and in Mosul, Britain and France agreed "to recognize and uphold an independent Arab State or a Confederation of Arab States . . . under the suzerainty of an Arab Chief." Within this central zone

² Russia laid no claim on the Arab territories of the Ottoman Empire. It contented itself with Constantinople and the environs thereof, as well as portions of Eastern Anatolia adjoining the Turco-Russian frontier.

were to be two spheres, in each of which one of the two European Powers was to "have a right of priority in enterprises and local loans" and sole right to "supply foreign advisers or officials." The remainder of the Fertile Crescent was to be partitioned into three separate zones, in each of which either France or Britain was to be "at liberty to establish such direct or indirect administration or control as they may desire or as they may deem fit to establish after agreement with the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States." One British zone was to comprise Baghdad and Basra in Mesopotamia; the other, Haifa and Acre on the Mediterranean. The French zone was to extend from a point north of Acre up to and including Cilicia on the Syrian Coast. Finally, the Syrian coast south of Haifa was to be placed under an international administration.

In short, the Sykes-Picot Agreement provided for the division of the Fertile Crescent into six separate political entities: two under direct British rule, one under direct French rule, one under indirect British rule, one under indirect French rule, and one under an international administration.³

The actual division of the spoils, however, took a different shape from that contemplated in the Sykes-Picot Agreement. As we shall see later, neither the independent Arab state (or states) nor the international administration was set up; and, instead of six, ten political entities were carved out of the Fertile Crescent.

* * *

Although the Anglo-Franco-Russian Agreement was negotiated and concluded in complete secrecy, it soon came to be widely known. The Bolshevik Government of Russia, repudiating the policy of the Czars, revealed the existence as well as the content of the Agreement shortly after coming to power pursuant to the revolution of 1917. The Turks eagerly gave wide

³ The full text of the Agreement may be found in Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, *op. cit.*, pp. 428-430.

publicity to the matter among the Arabs. The disillusioned Arab leaders immediately sought explanations and reassurances from Britain. Such reassurances were given profusely in 1918, as follows:

1. The first British assurance was contained in a message from the British Government, on behalf of the Allies, transmitted to Husain by Commander D. G. Hogarth, of the Arab Bureau in Cairo, on January 4, 1918. It read, in part:

"The *Entente* Powers are determined that the Arab race shall be given full opportunity of once again forming a nation in the world. This can only be achieved by the Arabs themselves uniting, and Great Britain and her Allies will pursue a policy with this ultimate unity in view."⁴

In the record of the conversation which he had with Husain, upon transmitting the message of the British Government, Commander Hogarth noted:

"[The] King assented cordially saying it expressed the basis of all our Agreement. I said that owing to long lapse of time [the] Allies thought it well to repeat it now."⁵

2. On February 8, 1918, the British Government gave its second official assurance to King Husain. Referring to his inquiry concerning the veracity of Turkish reports about the designs of the Allied Powers to divide and rule the Arab territories, the British Government stated, in an official communication from the Foreign Office in London:

"It would be superfluous to point out that the object aimed at by Turkey is to sow doubt and suspicion between the Allied Powers and those Arabs who, under Your Majesty's leadership and guidance, are striving nobly to recover their ancient freedom. The Turkish policy is to create dissension by luring the Arabs into believing that the Allied Powers have designs on the Arab countries, and by representing to the Allies that the Arabs might be made to

⁴ *Great Britain and Palestine, op. cit.*, p. 147.

⁵ *Ibid.*

denounce their aspirations. But such intrigues cannot succeed in sowing dissension among those whose minds are directed by a common purpose to a common end.”⁶

After dismissing, as utterly unfounded and deceitful, the Turkish revelations about the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the British Government proceeded to renew its assurances and undertakings in the following words:

“His Majesty’s Government and their allies . . . are determined to stand by the Arab peoples in their struggle for the establishment of an Arab world in which law shall replace Ottoman injustice, and in which unity shall prevail over the rivalries artificially provoked by the policy of Turkish officials.

“His Majesty’s Government re-affirm their former pledge in regard to the liberation of the Arab peoples.

“His Majesty’s Government have hitherto made it their policy to ensure that liberation, and it remains the policy they are determined unflinchingly to pursue by protecting such Arabs as are already liberated from all dangers and perils, and by assisting those who are still under the yoke of the tyrants to obtain their freedom.”⁷

3. On June 16, 1918, the British Government gave similar categorical assurances to seven representatives of Arab nationalist groups, who had submitted a memorandum to the British High Commissioner in Cairo regarding the future of the Arab regions of the Ottoman Empire.

The British High Commissioner was instructed by his government to convey to the seven Arab leaders a message which was transmitted to them in Cairo by Commander D. G. Hogarth and Mr. O. Walrond. Referring to the classification made in the Arab leaders’ memorandum, in accordance with which the Arab regions were divided into four categories, the British Government made the following assertions:

a—In regard to the first two categories (i.e., “areas in Arabia

⁶ The full text of the communication may be found in Antonius, *Arab Awakening*, *op. cit.*, pp. 431-432.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 432.

which were free and independent before the outbreak of the war"; and "areas emancipated from Turkish control by the actions of the Arabs themselves during the present war"):

"His Majesty's Government recognize the complete and sovereign independence of the Arabs inhabiting these areas and support them in their struggle for freedom."

b—Regarding the third category, embracing "areas formerly under Ottoman domination, occupied by the Allied forces during the present war":

"It is the wish and desire of His Majesty's Government that the future government of these regions should be based upon the principle of the consent of the governed, and this policy has and will continue to have the support of His Majesty's Government."

c—As for "areas still under Turkish control," the British message declared:

"It is the wish and desire of His Majesty's Government that the oppressed peoples of these areas should obtain their freedom and independence, and towards the achievement of this object His Majesty's Government continue to labor."⁸

4. On October 17, 1918, General Allenby gave another assurance to the Arabs. He reported to his government the terms of the assurance as follows:

"I gave the Emir Faisal an official assurance that whatever measures might be taken during the period of military administration they were purely provisional and could not be allowed to prejudice the final settlement by the Peace Conference . . . I reminded the Emir Faisal that the Allies were in honour bound to endeavour to reach a settlement in accordance with the wishes of the peoples concerned, and urged him to place his trust wholeheartedly in their good faith."⁹

5. Finally, on November 7, 1918—just four days before the

⁸ The full text of the British Declaration may be found in *Ibid.*, pp. 433-434, and in *Great Britain and Palestine, op. cit.*, pp. 148-149.

⁹ *Great Britain and Palestine, op. cit.*, p. 149.

Armistice—the British and French Governments, in a joint declaration,¹⁰ proclaimed that the goal of their Eastern campaign was:

“the complete and final liberation of the peoples who have for so long been oppressed by the Turks, and the setting up of national governments and administrations that shall derive their authority from the free exercise of the initiative and choice of the indigenous populations.”

While proclaiming their readiness to “assist in the setting up of indigenous governments and administrations in Syria and Mesopotamia” and “to recognize them as soon as they are actually set up,” the British and French Governments announced that they had no wish “to impose this or that system upon the populations of those regions.”

These repeated reassurances served to dispel Arab doubts and to allay Arab fears. It was not until after the end of the war, when Faisal visited London on December 10, 1918, that he and his fellow-Arabs learned authoritatively that there was indeed a Sykes-Picot Agreement and that—in the words of George Antonius—“the Petrograd disclosures of secret compacts among the Allies were no figment of a malicious Bolshevik imagination.”¹¹

* * *

Events soon proved that Britain and France were as prepared to ignore the repeated declarations and reassurances of 1918, as they were ready to repudiate the Anglo-Arab Agreement of 1915/1916.

The actual disposal of the Arab territories—the division of, and the setting up of multiple British and French administra-

¹⁰ The full text of the Anglo-French Declaration may be found in Antonius, *Arab Awakening*, *op. cit.*, pp. 435-436, and in *Great Britain and Palestine*, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-150.

¹¹ Antonius, *Arab Awakening*, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

tions in the diverse states carved out of, the Fertile Crescent—was shaped and determined neither by the provisions of the Anglo-Arab Agreement and the successive British reaffirmations thereof, nor by the democratic principles so righteously enunciated in so many declarations by the Allied Powers during the War. The shape of the post-War arrangements in the Fertile Crescent was determined by Britain and France, acting in the light of their imperialistic interests, through mutual bartering via secret diplomacy; through Anglo-French manipulation of the deliberations at the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919, at the Allied Supreme Council Conference assembled at San Remo in 1920, and at the League of Nations in 1922; and, above all, through actual military occupation of the “liberated” areas of the Fertile Crescent.

The purposes and long-range interests of Britain and France were not identical, however. Anglo-French negotiations were protracted, and tussles were frequent. The intricate pattern of dismemberment of the Fertile Crescent, therefore, took shape slowly and piecemeal. Complex bilateral agreements, revisions, improvisations, compromises and military *faits accomplis*—all these factors had their bearing on the final shape of the territorial arrangements made after the First World War in the Fertile Crescent.

When the fluid pattern finally took firm shape, there arose from the confusion of those eventful early post-War years ten political entities, under diverse foreign administrations, in the area whose people had entered the War expecting to emerge free and united.



When the post-War arrangements took final form, the Fertile Crescent was divided as follows:

1. The Fertile Crescent was partitioned into Syria and Mesopotamia. The latter, as the state of Iraq, was placed under British

domination; the former was re-partitioned and placed under multiple British and French administrations.

2. Syria was divided into two zones: the northern, under French domination; and the southern, under British hegemony.

3. The southern sector of Syria was re-divided: the area west of the Jordan, designated Palestine,¹² was administered directly by British authorities; east of the Jordan, the *amirate* of Transjordan was set up under British suzerainty.

4. The northern sector of Syria was also re-divided: the lower portions of the coastal sector, consisting of the formerly quasi-autonomous district of Lebanon and additional districts adjoining it, were incorporated in 1920 in the new state of Greater Lebanon, which was placed under French hegemony; for the remainder of northern Syria, further partitioning was in store.

5. The north-western district of Cilicia was handed over to Turkey in 1921.

6. What remained of Syria after the separation of the entire southern sector, the lower coastal segments and the north-western segments of the northern sector, was subdivided further into four states: The mid-coastal region became the Alawite state in 1922; Jabal Druze, in the interior, was established as a separate entity in 1921; and, the remainder was divided into the state of Damascus and the state of Aleppo.¹³

¹² As is well known, Palestine was destined to be subjected to further partitioning in 1947.

¹³ The fate of these states remained fluid throughout the era of French rule. They underwent alternative re-unification and re-division. In 1922, a Syrian Federation was formed by the French authorities, comprising the states of Damascus, Aleppo and the Alawis, but excluding those of Greater Lebanon and Jabal Druze. This Federation was dissolved by the French High Commissioner in 1924. In 1925, two of the components of the former Federation, the states of Damascus and Aleppo, were combined into a single state of Syria, the state of the Alawis remaining separate from the new entity. In 1936, the state of the Alawis and the Government of Jabal Druze were annexed to the State of Syria; but in 1939 they were again given almost complete autonomy. It was not until 1942 that they were permanently attached to the state of Syria. (For details of these arrangements, see Hourani, Albert H., *Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, Oxford University Press, London, 1946, pp. 171-174.)

7. The district of Alexandretta was detached, first from the state of Aleppo and later on from the state of Syria, and placed under a special, semi-autonomous regime. In 1938, it was annexed by Turkey, with the concurrence of France.

5

The fragmentation of the Fertile Crescent into ten arbitrarily-delimited political entities was completed in the first few years of the post-War era. The process of dismemberment of the Arab World, begun at the opening of the past century, culminated after the end of the First World War in the establishment of a mosaic of administrations in the only Arab region which had until the War escaped division.

In two decades, however, the reverse process—the reintegration of Arab lands, as a sequel to their liberation—was to be set in motion.

The story of the process of reintegration and reunification, at the initiative of the Arabs themselves, will be told later (in Part III). Before we proceed to describe the slow ascent of the Arab World towards unity, however, we must turn our attention (in Part II) to the first stirrings of the urge for unity in the Arab heart, and to the subsequent birth and evolution of the idea of unity in the Arab mind.

PART TWO

**THE IDEA OF
ARAB UNITY**

FROM THE ABYSS—A CRY

1

WE have now told the story of the dismemberment of the Arab World. Our survey has shown how the ancient Near Eastern peoples, whose history and ethnic composition had been marked and decisively affected from the dawn of history by successive migrations and invasions from the Arabian Peninsula, were arabized in consequence of the Arab-Muslim incursions of the Seventh Century A.D. Under the early Arab regimes, they enjoyed a large measure of political unity. Though their lands came to be dominated (with marginal exceptions) by the Ottomans in the Sixteenth Century, the political unity of the Arab peoples was nevertheless preserved under imperial Ottoman rule until the turn of the Nineteenth Century. From then on, however, many Arab lands—in North Africa and on the southern and eastern coasts of the Arabian Peninsula—were detached and separated piecemeal from the Ottoman system, at times by insurgent provincial vassals and more frequently by occupation by European Powers. In the aftermath of the First World War,

the process of dismemberment of the Arab World passed through its final phase. Those Arab territories which until then had escaped separation from the Ottoman Empire and remained united under its suzerainty were occupied during and after the War by Britain and France and then partitioned and re-partitioned. By the end of the first quarter of the Twentieth Century, the 125-year-old process of fragmentation of the Arab World had reached its zenith.

At the end of the process of dismemberment, the Arab World became a divided community of peoples, leading separate political lives—largely under diverse Spanish, French, Italian and British regimes—in some *twenty-five* political entities.

* * *

The daily life of the Arabs was, from then on, destined to flow within the narrow confines of the new political entities, separated as they were by rigid and often arbitrary boundaries. Arab life was no longer capable of flowing freely throughout the region, within one political, administrative, legal, economic and cultural system. From then on, the one nation was condemned to living separate lives in separate compartments.

In each of the twenty-five segregated territorial units, distinct regulatory norms were superimposed on, and vigilantly applied to, the daily life of the subject population. The new moulds in which Arab life was compelled to grow were far from uniform: for they neither emanated from the will of a free population in a given, sealed territory; nor were planned in cognizance of the common interests, identity, and national character of the Arab community as a whole.

Generations of Arabs were doomed to living under, and to being regulated in their daily life by, an inevitable multiplicity in political structures and regimes, unevenness in political fortunes and experiences, diversity in local institutions, disparity in legal systems, dissonance in educational patterns, and discordance in economic policies and practices.

2

It was from this abyss of disunity that the idea of Arab unity was to emerge, sphinx-like, in awesome suddenness. Their homeland endlessly partitioned and re-partitioned *ad nauseam* for a century and a quarter, the Arab peoples were soon to experience a mystical urge for re-integration and re-union.

It is true: Other factors were to enter into the situation before the urge could become clear and compelling. It is also true that, even after the urge obtained, favorable conditions were to be awaited before the tortuous ascent to unity could begin in earnest. Above all, it is true that, when a refined concept of unity was formulated from the crude elemental urge, and the wherewithal to translate it into concrete actuality became available, the legacy of long decades of enforced separateness, in existence and growth, in struggle and experience, proved to be too durable and resilient to submit to instantaneous erasure—forbidding the serious entertaining of a simple idea of unity, and erecting obstacles in the path of its attainment.

But it is no less true that the cry for unity was uttered when Arab society lay prostrate and feeble in the depths of the abyss of disunity; and that, from the humiliation and disaster of boundless dismemberment, a budding Arab national movement derived negative impetus for embarking on an arduous climb—towards freedom, towards creative reform, and towards unity.

THE RESTORATIVE IMPULSE

1

THE cry for Arab unity was first uttered in the Fertile Crescent, particularly in Syria. It was there that the clamor was made by the people at large, and was expressed not only in words but also in uprisings. It was there, too, that the popular outcry soon became an insistent national demand, and eventually articulated itself in terms of a concept of Arab unity to which the people as a whole adhered. It was there, moreover, that cry, clamor, demand and concept developed in due course into a doctrine, and gave birth to organized movements for action. And it was there, finally, that the dedication to the ideal of Arab unity remained supreme. Even when the call for Arab unity was taken up by other sectors of the Arab nation, and even when the theretofore-bifurcated national movement emerged as one movement—at once nationalist in character and pan-Arab in scope—the Fertile Crescent in general, and Syria in particular, which had been the cradle of this movement, continued to be its major stronghold.

* * *

Many factors contributed to this phenomenon. Some were immediate; others, deep-rooted in the distant past.

In the Fertile Crescent, the process of arabization had gone farther than elsewhere in the Arab World. Semitic migrations from the Arabian Peninsula had rendered the association between the Peninsula and the Fertile Crescent since the dawn of history more intimate and vital than the association between the Peninsula and any other sector of the Arab World. More particularly, Arab tribes had been immigrating from the Peninsula into, and settling in, the Fertile Crescent for over a millennium before the Muslim-Arab incursions of the Seventh Century A.D. For centuries thereafter, fresh waves of Arab immigrants continued to come to the Fertile Crescent, performing, in the apt phrase of Professor H. A. R. Gibb, their perennial "eugenic and demographic function as a reservoir of Arab vitality."¹ In addition to having had this long and vital demographic association with the Arabian Peninsula, the Fertile Crescent had also been the seat of the Arab Caliphate at its height. Damascus had been the capital of the Umayyads; Baghdad, of the Abbasids. Syria and Mesopotamia respectively had been the bases of the two successive centralized pan-Arab regimes.

In view of these factors, it was perhaps natural that the revival of the Nineteenth Century should have taken a distinctively Arab character in the Fertile Crescent, while assuming a religious-Muslim character in the Peninsula and an Egyptian character in Egypt. The seeds of Arab nationalism found more fertile soil in Syria and Mesopotamia, where the ingredients of Arab nationhood obtained more abundantly than elsewhere, and where the potentialities for the growth of Arab national consciousness, transcending sectarian and religious distinctions as well as territorial bounds, were available in larger measure. Accordingly, when political events in the early Twentieth Century

¹ Gibb, H. A. R., "The Future for Arab Unity," in Ireland, P. W. (editor), *The Near East: Problems and Prospects*, University of Chicago Press, 1945, p. 88.

brought the formerly latent political character of the Arab revival in the Fertile Crescent out into the open, and sharpened the people's consciousness of their urgent political needs and interests while relegating long-range cultural and spiritual purposes to the background for the time being, it was an Arab nationalist movement that burst forth. During the First World War, when this movement plunged into organized politico-military action, it was as an Arab Revolt that it expressed itself—a revolt whose ultimate political-military leadership rested in Husain and his sons, but whose doctrinal and ideological inspiration and mass support came from Arab nationalist societies and groupings in the Fertile Crescent.

The primary emphasis of the Arab insurgents was on *liberation* from Ottoman rule; but it was within the context of an existing Arab *unity* that they thought and acted, and it was in the hope of the preservation of that unity that they fought. Primary emphasis was laid on national freedom because it was precisely national freedom that was then lacking; over-all unity was then, and had been throughout the period of Ottoman rule, already a reality. That Arab unity was not articulately stated as a purpose of the Revolt was due mainly to the fact that, since unity was already an accomplished and established *reality*, it would have been superfluous and indeed illogical to include it in the scope of the purposes which the insurgents hoped to *attain*. Moreover, articulate insistence upon the unification of the Arab territories after the War would have been indicative of some doubt, either about the reality of unity at that time, or about the certainty of its preservation afterwards. Furthermore, since the preservation of unity in principle, and the structural form it was to take in the future in practice, were considered within the domestic jurisdiction of the Arab peoples who launched the Revolt believing that they would emerge from the War sovereign, the question of unity did not properly fall within the purview of the negotiations they were at that time conducting with outside parties.

The preservation of Arab unity after the War, then, was not the less an aim of the Arab Revolt because it was not specifically stated to be such in the Anglo-Arab negotiations of 1915. Unity, on the contrary, was the framework within which were to be realized those aspirations around which Anglo-Arab negotiations revolved—namely, freedom and self-determination. As Edward Atiyah says: “All through these Anglo-Arab negotiations the Arabs (whether Hussein and his sons or the societies that represented the Syrian and Iraqi nationalist movements) were thinking in terms of one Arab kingdom east of Suez, uniting the Arabian Peninsula with Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq,”—a project which was “inspired by dreams of past glory and intended to re-create as much of the Umayyad or Abbasid Empire as was possible.”²

2

The decisive factor which made it inevitable that the cry for Arab unity be uttered, and that it be voiced first and most emphatically in the Fertile Crescent (particularly in Syria), was that this sector of the Arab World, which, together with portions of the Arabian Peninsula, had alone escaped dismemberment during the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, was destined to witness after the War the gravest and most arbitrary form of fragmentation ever imposed upon an Arab land, in a manner which made even the hated rule of the Turks seem merciful by comparison. As Najla Izzeddin has observed: “From the point of view of Arab unity, political, economic, and cultural, the post-war settlement forced upon the Arabs by Great Britain and France was definitely a retrogression from the conditions in existence under the Turks.”³

That the cumulative partitioning and re-partitioning was to lead to the establishment of ten political entities in a continuous and an integral geographical unit which for many centuries had

² Atiyah, *The Arabs*, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-93.

³ Izzeddin, Najla, *The Arab World*, Regnery, Chicago, 1953, p. 318.

enjoyed politico-administrative unity; that this fragmentation was mercilessly arbitrary, erecting artificial barriers which corresponded neither to geographical, visible demarcations, nor to historical precedent; and that the post-War carving of many units out of one continuous territory took place within the span of three or four years, and was indeed established *de facto* only a few months after the end of the War—all these factors militated to make the impact of the division of the Fertile Crescent upon the population explosive.

The reaction of the Arabs was instantaneous. It was negative and violent.

Similar reaction had not been aroused in the past century by the detachment of one Arab territory after another, in North Africa and on the southern and eastern coasts of the Arabian Peninsula.

The difference between the two reactions may be partly due to the difference between the respective degrees of national consciousness, resulting from differences of time and place. But this is only a partial, and indeed a secondary, explanation.

The decisive explanation relates to the *suddenness* and the *arbitrariness* of the post-War fragmentation of the Fertile Crescent.

Nineteenth Century dismemberment took place *gradually*. One Arab land after another was detached from Ottoman rule—sometimes decades apart. This leisurely nibbling at the Arab World between 1798 and 1912 contrasted sharply with the sudden and simultaneous fragmentation of the Fertile Crescent from 1918 to 1922.

Moreover, the Arab lands of North Africa, which were occupied and detached from the Ottoman system by European Powers in the Nineteenth Century, were natural territorial units. They had had traditions of territorial separateness and semi-autonomy, under provincial governors subject to the suzerainty of the Sultan. And, in any case, the internal unity of each of

them was preserved by the annexing European Power.⁴ The division of the Fertile Crescent, by contrast, erected artificial and arbitrary barriers in the midst of a continuous territory, and tore asunder its internal unity as well as its unity with the rest of the Arab World.

By virtue of its suddenness as well as its arbitrariness, then, the post-War dismemberment of the Fertile Crescent aroused responses which had not been aroused by the slow process of dismemberment of other regions of the Arab World in the Nineteenth Century.

* * *

Stirred by the knowledge that their immediate territory was to be suddenly and arbitrarily dismembered, the Arabs of the Fertile Crescent at first struggled for the *preservation* of the political unity which had been theirs throughout Ottoman rule until the First World War; when fragmentation became an accomplished fact, at the hands of Britain and France and with the sanction of the League of Nations, the Arabs of the Fertile Crescent struggled for the *restoration* of their pre-War unity. Whether in their endeavor to *protect*, or in their effort to *re-establish*, their unity of pre-War days, the Arabs of the Fertile Crescent were animated by a dedication to a status of unity which was alive in their mind, memory, and immediate experience. In this respect, also, their situation differed from that of the Arabs of other lands, particularly North Africa. Here, Arab unity was a distant memory. As a dream, it lacked immediacy; as an experienced, concrete reality, it was unknown to the generation of the day.

* * *

⁴ The case of Morocco is an exception. There, Spanish, French and International zones were brought into being in 1912. Hence, the Moroccan liberation movement was also characterized from the outset by the simultaneous outcry for *re-unification* as well as *independence*. In recent years, the attainment of Moroccan independence accelerated the process of the restoration of Moroccan unity.

In short, neither the new situation which the Arabs of the Fertile Crescent had to face after the First World War, nor the immediately-preceding situation of unity which they sought to preserve and, shortly thereafter, to restore, obtained elsewhere in the Arab World. Accordingly, it was the Arabs of the Fertile Crescent who were destined to utter the first call for Arab unity in modern times.

These circumstances, however, afford only a partial explanation for the rise of the urge for Arab unity in the Fertile Crescent in the early post-War years. Fuller explanation, which also accounts for the intensity of that urge, must be sought in other aspects of the post-War settlement which affected the Fertile Crescent.

The outcry for unity, while emanating from a sincere attachment to unity as such, was heightened by the Arabs' rejection of other aspects of the post-War settlement as well. For that settlement entailed other injuries to Arab interests in addition to the destruction of Arab unity. The force of the longing of the Arabs to protect or to reestablish their former unity was strengthened by their violent reaction to the post-War settlement *as a whole*. Their revolt against the Allied plans for the dismemberment of the Fertile Crescent was but one manifestation of the total rebellion of the Arabs against the whole new order imposed upon them after the War by their wartime allies.

Although it is only as it affected the situation of Arab unity that the post-War settlement concerns us here, we must nevertheless review the other aspects of the settlement, inasmuch as these aspects stirred a total rejection by the Arabs of the new order as such, and therefore intensified the Arab rejection of the fragmentation which was inflicted upon the Fertile Crescent, and strengthened the urge for the reestablishment of unity.

In the first place: the post-War settlement extended to the Fertile Crescent the newly-conceived formula of the mandate. As Count Carlo Sforza once observed, the mandate was "a hypo-

critical form used to cover the ancient imperialism with a halo of undeserved sanctity.”⁵ Caustically but correctly, he also said: “Conceived in generosity, like most Wilsonian ideas, the mandate was born in sin.”⁶ The initial establishment of “provisional” military administrations in some sectors of the Fertile Crescent; the expansion of the area of jurisdiction of these administrations to that region in its entirety; the elimination of the Arab Kingdom set up in Syria; the retroactive endorsement, by the League of Nations in 1922, of the Anglo-French territorial arrangements made in 1920 at San Remo; and, finally, the *de jure* establishment of British or French rule in every sector of the region—all these developments, descending upon the Arabs in stunning suddenness, shattered their hope for immediate freedom and self-determination, which had motivated their uprising against the Ottomans.

In the second place: one vital sector of the Arab homeland was subjected to a sad and perhaps unprecedented fate, far worse than mere occupation by a foreign Power. The southern portion of the eastern Mediterranean coast, Palestine, was to be the scene of a new adventure, sanctioned by Britain in a secret promise made during the War and now, unlike many other British wartime pledges, destined to be respected and observed by its maker.

In addition to having been the subject of British pledges to the Arabs in 1915 (subsequently reaffirmed in 1918), Palestine was also included in the area concerning which Anglo-French bargaining in 1916 culminated in the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement.⁷ Moreover, in 1917, the same territory became the subject of a third process of negotiation, to which the selfsame British Government was a party; and this later negotiation produced the Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917, which was kept in

⁵ Sforza, “The Near East in World Politics,” in Ireland, *Near East*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁷ See *above*, Chapter III, Section 4.

tight secrecy and remained unknown to the Arabs until the War was over, in the same way in which the Sykes-Picot Agreement was concealed from the Arabs.

Like the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Balfour Declaration was incompatible with the Anglo-Arab Agreement of 1915/1916, and with the reaffirmation thereof in five successive assurances in 1918. Like the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Balfour Declaration constituted an undertaking by the British Government to dispose of a territory of the Arab World, without the consent or even the knowledge of the Arabs, to a third party. Like the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Balfour Declaration was issued by the British Government before Britain had come to occupy the territory in question; Britain could not invoke, in justification of its act, even the dubious right of occupation, much less the natural or legal right of ownership or accepted suzerainty. But, unlike the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Balfour Declaration contained inherent contradictions which rendered its honest implementation impossible. And, unlike the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Balfour Declaration entailed, as a matter of eventual practical necessity though not as a matter of textual implication, the displacement of the existing Arab populations of Palestine, and the bringing-in of multitudes of aliens from outside to inhabit the land of the Arabs. The outcome of the policy of the Balfour Declaration—the displacement of the Arabs, the bringing-in of Zionists to replace them, and the setting-up of a Zionist state in Palestine—while disavowed by Britain at that time, was nevertheless foreseen by the Arabs as the inevitable result of that policy, and as the ultimate objective of the Zionist Movement.

In rejecting, and rebelling against, the new order imposed on them by Britain and France after the First World War, therefore, the Arabs rejected and rebelled against the introduction of new imperialisms into their land, and the inauguration of a process of de-arabization in a portion of their homeland, as well as against the fragmentation of the Fertile Crescent. The Arabs viewed the post-War settlement as a three-pronged attack on

their aspirations and vital interests: it endangered the *freedom* and the *unity* of the entire area of the Fertile Crescent, and the very *existence* of the population of one of its segments. Having entered the War, as allies of Britain and France, in the belief that their emancipation from Ottoman imperialism would be ensured and their unity preserved, the Arabs were soon to be disillusioned in each of these two inter-related beliefs, and to encounter a new and unsuspected menace to their national existence. Instead of retaining the freedom and self-determination won during the War, they were to be placed under new forms of foreign domination; instead of continuing to enjoy their established unity, they were to suffer merciless and arbitrary fragmentation of their land into a mosaic of artificial political entities; and, as an unprecedented danger, they were to witness the beginnings of a process which, they knew, would ultimately lead to the exile *en masse* of a sector of their people from its ancestral land, the transplanting of other persons from different regions of the world onto that Arab territory, and the setting up of an alien regime, animated by a national movement bent on expansion in the future.

The Arabs rebelled against the post-War settlement in its organic totality, and rejected each of its three aspects. This total rejection furnished additional vigor to the forcefulness of the Arab rejection of political fragmentation.

* * *

To be subjected to occupation, domination and dismemberment by a traditional enemy, or in the course of a defensive war against a victorious invader, is one thing: it is quite another thing to be subjected to the same vicissitudes at the hands of one's very allies, and in consequence of a war which ended in one's victory.

It was not as invaders that Britain and France had come to the Fertile Crescent during the War: it was as allies of the Arab

forces, conducting the same war against the common enemy. The hostile invasion of the Fertile Crescent by British and French forces took place not during the War, when the Arabs and the Allies were fighting side by side, but after the end of the War—when Britain and France set up “provisional” occupation regimes, and gradually extended their “temporary” jurisdiction to the entire area. And it was on the basis of this *de facto* post-War occupation (protested at the time by the Arabs, and accepted under duress upon the assurance that it was temporary and provisional pending the final settlement) that subsequent *de jure* occupation and domination, as well as dismemberment, took place.

It was not by a professed enemy, then, but by their wartime allies and co-liberators, that the Arabs came to be dominated after the War.

Add to all this the fact that the subjugation and fragmentation of the Arab lands of the Fertile Crescent (and, as far as Palestine was concerned, the virtual decimation of the Arabs) at the hands of their allies of yesterday, were at one and the same time in violation of the terms of their mutual alliance of 1915/1916, in glaring contradiction of the repeated reaffirmations thereof made in 1918, and in desecration of the principles proclaimed by the Allies as animating their war-effort and guiding their post-War arrangements. Add also the fact that, far from being the result of an after-thought, as it were, or the outcome of the rise of a new situation after the War, the Anglo-French arrangements were in fact planned and designed during the War, at the very time when the Arabs were making their contribution to the common victory. Add all these to the afore-mentioned considerations, and the total will spell, as it did to the Arabs, *bad faith* and *betrayal*.

Moral outrage, no less than the frustration of their fond aspirations and the harm inflicted upon their vital interests, prompted the violent, instantaneous and total rejection by the Arabs of the post-War settlement as a whole.

The rejection of the fragmentation of their territory was only one manifestation of their total rejection of the new order; and the former rejection partook of the fury and violence which characterized the latter, as well as of its negativeness.

3

Arab protests against the possibility of dismemberment of the Fertile Crescent were voiced as soon as news of the Sykes-Picot Agreement came to their ears, via Turkish publicity, after the revelations made by the Bolsheviks. As we saw earlier,⁸ it was in response to those inquiries and protests that the British made their repeated reassurances in 1918.

The restored confidence of the Arabs was soon shaken by new portents of future Allied betrayal. On October 3, 1918, the flag of the Arab forces was hoisted in Beirut—as it had been in the interior of Syria and, indeed, wherever Arab forces were responsible for the administration of the liberated territories, pending the formal establishment of self-governing institutions. The French protested the action, and General Allenby, the Supreme Allied Commander, upheld their protest. The removal of the flag, upon Allenby's orders, caused near-mutiny in the ranks of the Arab forces, who could not tolerate Faisal's acquiescence in the Allied act; and a wave of resentment swept the country.

Around the same time, the Allied forces in Syria—unlike those in Mesopotamia—were re-organized on the basis of separate administrations. This measure, though it was declared to be “temporary” and “provisional,” added to the violent effervescence already created by the flag incident, and contributed to the unrest—which the Allies sought again to pacify by their joint Declaration of November 7, 1918.⁹

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⁸ See *above*, Chapter III, Section 4.

⁹ *Ibid.*

The national demand for the preservation of pre-War unity first expressed itself in diplomatic representations in the council of the nations. Faisal's appearance before the Versailles Peace Conference was the occasion.¹⁰ The main burden of his address, given on February 6, 1919, was to stress the claim of the Arabs of the Fertile Crescent and the Arabian Peninsula to independence and unity. Emphasizing the factors that argued for cohesion among the populations of these territories, he also condemned the Sykes-Picot Agreement.

Faisal's demands for unity were voiced on a national scale, by duly elected representatives of the population of Syria in all its sectors. These delegates were elected to form the first truly-representative national assembly in the modern history of Syria. Their election was prompted by the fact that it was widely believed, in the spring of 1919, that an Inter-Allied Commission of Inquiry, appointed by the Peace Conference, would soon visit Syria in order to ascertain the wishes of its population. The proposal for the formation and dispatching of this Commission had been made by Faisal in his address before the Peace Conference, and had been approved by the Conference, largely upon the insistence of President Wilson, on March 25, 1919. Despite the formal approval of the Conference, however, the Commission as originally proposed and as approved did not come into being. Resistance to the idea had come from many quarters; and the French, British, and Italian Governments, who had agreed to appoint representatives, failed to do so. Only the United States appointed representatives on the Commission—Dr. Henry C. King, and Mr. Charles R. Crane. Hence the common designation of the group as the King-Crane Commission.

It was in order to acquaint the Commission with the Arab

¹⁰ Technically, Faisal was recognized by the Conference as the representative of the Kingdom of the Hijaz, where his father, Husain, had been proclaimed king during the War. But, in fact and in the eyes of the participating delegations, Faisal was the spokesman for all the Arab peoples who had taken part in the Arab Revolt.

attitude, officially expressed through the deliberations of duly-elected representatives of the people, that the national assembly, formally known as the General Syrian Congress, came into being. The Congress held its first session in Damascus, and, on July 2, 1919, it adopted ten resolutions, which constituted an authoritative expression of the attitude of the Arabs of Syria towards the national questions facing the Arabs in the aftermath of the War. As far as unity was concerned, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

"We desire that there should be no dismemberment of Syria, and no separation of Palestine or the coastal regions in the west or the Lebanon from the mother country; and we ask that the unity of the country be maintained under any circumstances.

"We desire that Iraq should enjoy complete independence, and that no economic barriers be placed between the two countries.

"The basic principles proclaimed by President Wilson in condemnation of secret treaties cause us to enter an emphatic protest against any agreement providing for the dismemberment of Syria . . ." ¹¹

In the meantime, the King-Crane Commission had arrived in Syria on June 10, 1919. It spent six weeks in the country—interviewing individuals and delegations, receiving petitions (over 1,800), and acquainting itself with the desires of the population. Its report, submitted on August 28, 1919, contained not only the conclusions and recommendations of the Commission itself, but also summaries of the views of the people of Syria.

Among the recommendations of the Commission, the following pertain to the question of unity:

Concerning Syria, the Commission recommended—

" . . . that the unity of Syria be preserved, in accordance with the earnest petition of the great majority of the people of Syria.

"The territory concerned is too limited, the population too small,

¹¹ The full text of the resolutions may be found in Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, *op. cit.*, pp. 440-442. The paragraphs quoted above are Resolutions No. 8 and 9, and an extract from Resolution No. 10.

and the economic, geographic, racial and language unity too manifest, to make the setting up of independent States within its boundaries desirable, if such division can possibly be avoided. The country is very largely Arab in language, culture, traditions, and customs.

"This recommendation is in line with important 'general considerations' already urged, and with the principles of the League of Nations, as well as in answer to the desires of the majority of the population concerned . . ." ¹²

The Commission made recommendations in a similar vein with respect to Iraq:

"We recommend . . . that the unity of Iraq be preserved. . . . The wisdom of a united country needs no argument in the case of Iraq." ¹³

The Commission also observed that it was "plainly desirable that there be general harmony in the political and economic institutions and arrangements of Iraq and Syria." ¹⁴

* * *

Notwithstanding the unequivocal demand of the Arabs for the preservation of their unity, at least in Syria—as expressed in the statements of Faisal, the resolutions of the General Syrian Congress, and the findings of the King-Crane Commission—Britain and France persisted in laying the groundwork for complete *de facto* and eventual *de jure* occupation and dismemberment of the Fertile Crescent. When they decided to reorganize the occupation regimes already in existence in a manner that seemed to indicate permanent division of the area into separate British and French zones of influence, Faisal once more protested the new designs. His protest was embodied in a note dated October 11, 1919, constituting a further reiteration of the at-

¹² The full text of the recommendations of the Commission concerning Syria and Iraq may be found in Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, *op. cit.*, pp. 443-458. The extracts quoted above appear on pp. 444-445.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 456.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

tachment of the Arabs to their unity and their desire to preserve it.

On March 6, 1920, the General Syrian Congress convened its second session. At the second meeting of the session, held on March 8, 1920, the Congress transformed itself into a constituent assembly, proclaimed the independence of Syria (in its geographic unity, including the Lebanon and Palestine), endorsed the system of decentralization in the future administration of Syria, and called upon Britain and France to evacuate their forces from Syrian soil. The Congress also proclaimed the right of Iraq to independence; and, taking cognizance of the vital interdependence of the two lands, it called for political and economic union between them.¹⁵

On the same day, Arab nationalist leaders from Iraq assembled in Damascus and passed a similar resolution, proclaiming the independence of Iraq and calling for its economic and political union with Syria.¹⁶

* * *

The call for unity was uttered also by political parties and organizations.

In Ottoman days, such parties had operated in secret, owing to the oppressiveness of Ottoman rule. After the end of the War, however, some of the older secret organizations came out into the open, and new ones sprang into being.

The former Decentralization Party was re-incarnated in the new Syrian Union Party, which was established in Egypt in 1918, largely by Arab nationalist leaders from Syria. The platform of the new grouping called for the national unification of Syria, its independence, and its administration on the basis of

¹⁵ Darwazah, Muhammad Izzat, *Hawla al-Haraka al-Arabiyya al-Haditha (Concerning the Modern Arab Movement)*, (six volumes); vol. i, Sidon, 1950, pp. 113-114.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

the principle of decentralization. One of the first acts of the party, in its new form, was to protest the dismemberment of Syria and to initiate grass-roots programs promoting the cause of Syrian unity.¹⁷

Another formation of the early post-War years was the Arab Club, which was primarily a cultural association aiming at the promotion of Arab national causes through cultural, non-political means.¹⁸

The most important of the new political organizations, however, was the Arab Independence Party. This was the new version of the former *al-Fatat* secret society, of which almost all the leaders of the Arab nationalist movement in Syria and Iraq in the post-War period had been former members. The new party called for the independence and unity of all Arab lands.¹⁹

* * *

The desire for the preservation of unity was expressed, as we have now seen, in various forms, as a protest against the schemes for dismembering the Fertile Crescent. Faisal, voicing the desires of the people, expressed the demand for unity in formal memoranda dispatched to the Powers and in addresses at international gatherings. The General Syrian Congress made authoritative statements in the name of the people, in its two sessions of 1919 and 1920, proclaiming the national attachment to unity. So did the informal Iraqi Congress. So, too, did the multitude of individuals and groups who were interviewed by, or who submitted petitions to, the King-Crane Commission. And, as a final manifestation of national unanimity, the political parties, now appearing openly on the public scene for the first time, voiced the national determination to preserve unity.

* * *

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 74-88. (It was this party that had taken the initiative in calling for the General Syrian Congress.)

When the decisions taken at San Remo were made public on May 5, 1920, and it was a foregone conclusion that the *de facto* dismemberment of the Fertile Crescent would soon receive automatic endorsement by the League of Nations and thereby gain a semblance of legality, despite its obvious incompatibility with the principle of self-determination which was claimed to animate the League, the Arabs had no alternative but to give final expression to their rejection of the post-War settlement in insurrection. Antonius sums it up in the following words:

"What with the decisions of the San Remo conference, the occupation of the whole of Syria by the French,²⁰ the consolidation of British control in Iraq on a basis which denied even the outward forms of self-government, and the emergence of a policy of intensive Zionist development in Palestine, the year 1920 has an evil name in Arab annals: it is referred to as the Year of Catastrophe. It saw the first armed risings that occurred in protest against the post-War settlement imposed by the Allies on the Arab countries. In that year, serious outbreaks took place in Syria, Palestine and Iraq. There came a time when practically the whole of the Arab Rectangle²¹ was seething with discontent expressing itself in acts of violence."²²

* * *

The insurrections failed to protect the unity that had until then continued to exist. Anglo-French designs won the day. From then on, the desire to *preserve* an existing unity was transformed into the desire to *restore* and *reestablish* a recently destroyed unity.

Unity became a principal goal of the Arab national movement. The idea of Arab unity was born.

²⁰ Employing post-War terminology, Antonius uses the term Syria to indicate the northern sector of geographical Syria.

²¹ The "Arab Rectangle" is the term Antonius uses to designate what we have consistently labelled "the Fertile Crescent."

²² Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

4

Our analysis of the factors which engendered the Arab urge for unity, and which determined its rise in the Fertile Crescent, and our survey of the main expressions of this urge in its infancy, serve also to characterize the Arab desire for unity in terms of its genesis, primary motivations and early manifestations.

We may conclude from this survey, *first*, that, when the idea of Arab unity was born, it bore primary and immediate relevance only to the sector of the Arab World which was its cradle, namely the Fertile Crescent; and, *secondly*, that that idea was fundamentally *retroactive* and *restorative* in its generative impulse, and therefore in its essential character.

The idea pointed to a *past unity*—seeking at first to *protect* it, and, when it was changed by forces beyond Arab control, to *restore* it.

It is true: the desire to preserve the immediate past, and to undo the events which altered it, was an echo of the attachment of the Arabs not to that immediate past as such, but to the unity which had existed in that past. Nevertheless, it remains true that, conceived in longing for the recent past, the idea of Arab unity was at birth the child of a whole-hearted act of rejection and cry for retroaction and restoration.

BIRTH AND EVOLUTION OF THE IDEA OF ARAB UNITY

I

IDEAS have a life of their own. They interact with events, circumstances, and historical forces. These outward factors may provide the stimulus for the birth of an idea. They may determine, to some extent, the course of its growth. They may also determine, from time to time, the position and the relative importance of each of the impulses animating a given idea, in relation to other impulses; and they may thus affect the balance or imbalance of the elements composing that idea. But, in the final analysis, an idea is not entirely at the mercy of the external factors which have a bearing on its birth and formative growth. Ideas have a vitality of their own, an inherent logic and dynamism. They unfold themselves, indeed, in response to the trend of events; but they unfold themselves essentially in accordance with the inner reason which animates them. Outward factors are not omnipotent. The world of ideas always

reserves for itself a measure of independence, which it jealously guards and never surrenders.

* * *

These reflections apply to the idea of Arab unity.

Born, as it was, in the aftermath of the First World War, it had been conceived in the four turbulent years which intervened between the Armistice of 1918 and the final imposition of the post-War settlement in 1922. But it had had a potential and implicit existence ever since the beginning of the modern Arab awakening in the middle of the Nineteenth Century.

The post-War circumstances which aroused the urge for, and then gave birth to the idea of, Arab unity, were destined to exercise a manifest influence upon the character of that idea in its infancy. But, subsequently, the idea emancipated itself from the influence of those circumstances. In its adulthood, it manifested its independence by outgrowing the negativeness and retroactiveness which had characterized its infancy, and by overstepping the horizons to which its vision and reach had been confined, under the influence of its generative circumstances. In so doing, it virtually returned to the original comprehensiveness, creativeness, and positiveness inherent in its earlier origins in the Nineteenth Century Arab awakening.

* * *

The events which heralded the conception and birth of the idea of Arab unity helped transform it from a silent idea (as it had been in the Nineteenth Century) into an articulate one, from a passive idea into an active one, from an implicit idea into an explicit one.

In doing so, however, those events also wrought essential changes in the purpose and range of the idea.

The *rejection impulse*, under the influence of which the idea

of Arab unity was conceived as an urge to preserve theretofore-existing unity and as one manifestation of a total rebellion against portents of a slowly-unfolding pattern of Allied betrayal, imparted to the then-embryonic idea the streaks of retroactiveness which characterized its early, turbulent years.

The *restorative impulse*, which was mother to the idea of Arab unity, oriented this idea and turned its gaze towards the immediate past. For, despite the abhorrent nature of many of the features of that past, it was nonetheless considered superior to the situation created by the post-War settlement, in that it had at least preserved Arab unity. Hence the nostalgic longing for the recent past and the demand that the unity enjoyed until 1918 be restored—which all but constituted the total content of the idea of Arab unity in the early 1920's.

As a result of the rejection and the restoration impulses, particularly the second, the territorial scope of the infant idea of Arab unity came to be far more restricted than had been the scope of its potential antecedent. In the Nineteenth Century, the implicit concept of Arab unity had been pan-Arab in scope; its range had been coextensive with the range of the use of the Arabic tongue and the entrenchment of Arab culture and traditions. Immediately after its birth, however, the idea of Arab unity came to embrace only that area which had continued to enjoy political unity until the War. For, ironically, the territorial scope of the idea had come to be delimited by the very post-War settlement, in rebellion against which the idea had arisen.

Between 1918 and 1922, the territorial range of the articulate idea of Arab unity underwent further shrinking. At first, it embraced all the Arab regions of the Ottoman Empire whose populations had participated in the Revolt of 1916, namely, the Fertile Crescent and the Hijaz. Then it came to preoccupy itself with the Fertile Crescent alone, to which the Allies' schemes for subjugation and dismemberment of Arab lands were confined. Finally, it tended to look back nostalgically to, and to seek to revive, the political unity of Syria alone—for the post-War settle-

ment was nowhere as merciless as it was in Syria, and to Syria was reserved the fate of being not only severed from neighboring Arab territories but also internally divided.

2

The events which led to the post-War settlement, then, not only occasioned the conception and birth of the idea of Arab unity, but also aroused the impulses of rejection and restoration which determined respectively the character and territorial scope of the idea of Arab unity in its infancy.

But the character of the infant was before long outgrown by the adult.

As we observed earlier, ideas have an inner dynamism of their own. The evolution and future growth of the idea of Arab unity were to follow an independent course—a course charted not in accordance with the circumstances which generated the idea in the early post-War years, but in accordance with its own inherent logic, latent and implicit as this logic was in the idea's potential existence in the Nineteenth Century Arab awakening. The oak was the child of the soil and the acorn, not of the winds that sculptured it.

The idea of Arab unity grew into adult maturity as it emancipated itself from its initial obsession with the post-War settlement, and shed the character bequeathed to it in its childhood by the circumstances of its conception and birth. As it cast off the character it had acquired in its infancy, it progressively came to possess a vision and a purpose more in consonance with the spirit and implications of the Nineteenth Century Arab awakening. Free from the immediate stimulation of external circumstances and from the passionate response thereto, which dominated its early turbulent years, the idea of Arab unity was thus able in its youth to return to itself.

This metamorphosis occurred shortly after the end of the War. As the first few years went by, the intensity of the early Arab reaction to the post-War settlement gradually spent itself. That reaction, it will be recalled, was stimulated partly by the import of the post-War settlement, and partly by the bad faith manifested by the Allies in the process of devising it. The moral shock engendered by the Allied betrayal soon ceased to stun the Arab mind; Arab revulsion persisted, but the shock, by the nature of the case, passed away. One is shocked by a phenomenon only at the moment of first encounter, although one may continue to detest it indefinitely thereafter. Similarly, with respect to the political implications of the post-War settlement, the initial passionate Arab efforts to avert, ameliorate or undo the harm embodied in the new order soon proved unavailing, and the heat of the early resistance subsequently cooled down, although Arab resentment and dissatisfaction persisted. The Arabs of the Fertile Crescent learned to live within the new order even though it remained essentially abhorrent to them; and they came to accept the new situation even though they did not approve it. Although it is not easy to cultivate, the practical virtue of accepting what one cannot approve appears at times to be the only alternative to suicide. This sad wisdom was acquired by the Arabs of the Fertile Crescent in the mid- and late-1920's.

The hope of eventual emancipation and unification was not abandoned; but the expectation of immediate fulfillment lingered only in the hearts of the naïve. The Arabs girded themselves for a prolonged and costly strife.

In this sedate mood, the subdued but unconquered spirit of Arab nationalists went through a process of reexamination of its strategy. It was clearly realized that, whatever might be their relative intrinsic merits and the degrees of priority they rated in relation to one another, foreign domination and territorial dismemberment stood in an unmistakable causal relationship with each other, and therefore had unequal claims to imperative chronological priority. Foreign domination was the cause; dis-

memberment, the effect. Foreign domination was also the mainstay of Arab disunity. Remove foreign domination, and you are free to restore unity; suffer foreign domination to continue, and you also suffer its bitter fruit, division. The national movement was constrained, therefore, to suspend its active challenging of dismemberment until it had successfully contended with, and removed, the rule of Britain and France.

While the national movement expressed itself in the form of uprisings and insurrections for independence during the two decades of the inter-War period, the active struggle for unity was halted. The dedication to unity as an ideal persisted in the Arab heart; but the progress towards unity was to remain confined to the realm of the mind, where the idea of unity was to undergo a process of refinement, clarification, and evolution.

When they were, thus, no longer passionately engaged in the active attempt to preserve or to restore the unity which had continued to exist until a short time before, Arab nationalists were freed from the orientation of their idea towards the past as well as from its limited territorial range. Their vision was no longer anchored to the immediate past. They could go back, in memory, to a more distant past when all Arabs were united. They could also gaze beyond the horizons of the Fertile Crescent, to the wider bounds of the Arab World. Liberated from the compulsion to reverse a given concrete trend or to undo a given concrete deed, the Arabs found themselves able to entertain ideas and to cherish ideals which bore a greater intrinsic appeal, but which they had barred themselves from considering when they had allowed themselves to fall under the spell of the post-War settlement and had defined their tasks exclusively in terms of averting or destroying the new Allied-imposed order.

Imperceptibly, the original Nineteenth Century notion of an Arab awakening, rejuvenating Arab life and revitalizing Arab culture, and drawing its inspiration from the legacy of the Golden Ages of Arab history, elbowed its way back into the Arab mind. It was a notion which recognized no barrier among

the Arabs. It did not demand that Arab consciousness rise and set solely within the narrower horizons delimited by the situation of a recent past.

At the same time, a positive, creative impulse made itself felt in the Arab heart. Political unity came to be envisioned not as an antecedent condition which should be reestablished, but as a natural, normal, healthy condition, which should be attained for its own sake, regardless of whether or not it had ever existed in the past. A *normalizing impulse* came to animate the Arab desire for unity, supplanting the former *restoration impulse*. The pursuit of unity began to exercise the happy compulsion inherent in a joyful, creative task.

This gradual transformation of the idea of Arab unity was made possible by the disengagement of the Arab mind from the grips of that negative relationship with the post-War settlement in which it had permitted itself to be imprisoned. Self-extraction from their preoccupation with the evils of the new order, while it did not destroy the evils themselves, nevertheless freed the Arabs from the spell which had been cast over them, and which had demanded that they wrestle with those evils to the exclusion of any other concern. As a result of this subjective-spiritual emancipation, the Arabs were able to think and plan in terms of the verities inherent in their situation, instead of thinking and planning solely in terms of the implications of a passing situation which they had felt themselves constrained to oppose.

The inner dynamism of the idea of Arab unity was unleashed to unfold itself in accordance with its inherent logic, no longer hampered by the stifling limitations which had theretofore obstructed its natural growth towards healthy maturity.

3

The re-orientation of the idea of Arab unity, through the advent of a positive, creative impulse and the expansion of the range of Arab vision, was aided by four new stimuli.

In the first place, the Arab liberation movements in Egypt and in the Fertile Crescent were able to interact positively with one another and to follow parallel courses with identical objectives.

We noted in Chapter I that, in the Nineteenth Century, the two movements had been pursuing different objectives, in accordance with the different natures of their respective beginnings and inspirations. During the Arab Revolt, the gap became even wider. In fact, the two movements came to find themselves working at cross-purposes.

Egyptians, suffering from British occupation since 1882, tended to see in the Ottomans a hopeful threat to the British forces occupying Egyptian and Sudanese soil. On the other hand, the immediate interests of the Arabs of the Fertile Crescent and the Arabian Peninsula turned their sentiments in the opposite direction. For it was from the occupation and oppression of the Ottomans that these Arabs strove to be free; and, in their struggle for liberation, they found that they had mutual interests with Britain, with whom they therefore allied themselves.

The end of the War, however, was followed by the betrayal by Britain and France of their Arab wartime allies. Arab-British and Arab-French hostility was thus aroused in the Fertile Crescent and in the Peninsula. Accordingly, the Arabs in Asia and the Arabs in Africa came to have one enemy in the post-War years.

The opposition of all Arabs, then, came now to have an identical target—the European imperialism of Britain and France.¹ In opposition to this common menace, the Arabs throughout the Arab World found themselves united, in sentiment as well as in resistance.

The removal of the causes of dissonance in Arab political sentiment, and the emergence of a common threat to which the opposition of all Arabs was to be directed in the post-World War I era, made possible the integration of the Arab movements

¹ The only exceptions were in a sector of Morocco and in Libya, where the occupying Powers were Spain and Italy respectively.

throughout the Arab World, particularly in Egypt and the Fertile Crescent. To the bonds of common origin and common language, was now to be added the cohesive bond of common political interest.

* * *

In the second place, the advent of modern means of communication enhanced contact among the populations of the various Arab lands. Arabs overpassed the narrow confines of their immediate localities, within which their daily life and vision had been restricted. This had an incalculable effect on the emergence of concrete consciousness of the kinship among the Arab peoples, a consciousness theretofore largely confined to the intellectual groups.

Coinciding with the gradual awakening of the Arab peoples and their coming to assume greater importance in the affairs of their respective countries, the new possibilities of direct intercourse among the Arab peoples, which helped sharpen the popular awareness of the common bonds, accelerated the growth of an Arab national consciousness. Mutual responsiveness in tribulation helped counteract the divisive impact of the recent political fragmentation. Mutual sympathy cut across the artificial barriers erected by occupying Powers; and demonstrations of the support of one Arab people for another, in its wrestling with the common enemy, pierced the iron curtains with which imperialism had hoped to seal off one country from the rest and to suppress them one by one with impunity.

* * *

In the third place, the cultural revival, which had been gaining momentum, contributed to the sharpening of the Arab national consciousness.

Cultural enlightenment, by the nature of the case, wields a

unifying influence on Arab society. Arabic learning is possible only in the classical language, which is uniform throughout the Arab World. Familiarity with Arab history enhances the realization of national oneness among the peoples of all Arab lands. Acquaintance with Arabic culture, in which all Arabs may equally take pride, creates an added bond of common glory. The rate of progress in the dissemination of education and culture, therefore, was on the whole directly proportional to the rate of progress in the awareness of Arab nationhood.

* * *

In the fourth place, the idea of nationalism, which had found its way to the Arab World from Europe in the past century, came to exercise its appeal on a wider mass-basis after the War. Until the acceptance of the nationalist creed on a popular basis became virtually complete, Arab aspirations had expressed themselves in terms of elemental, universal human urges, not in nationalist phraseology. The urge for *freedom* had been felt as an extension of the individual urge for liberty, or as a patriotic longing for the protection of one's homeland from usurpers. Similarly, the urge for *unity* had been essentially non-political, capable of being satisfied with any structural arrangement as long as it did not entail tangible curbs on such limited measures of transportation and communication among Arab lands as had then been possible. With the advent of nationalism, however, these urges began to express themselves in ideological terms. The urge for freedom became a demand for the right to national self-determination, believed to be inalienably possessed by all peoples, large and small; and the urge for unity became the pursuit of the right of every national community to establish political statehood on its territory. Nationhood came to be envisaged as vested with an inherent right, and swayed by an insistent desire, to express itself politically in nation-statehood. The success of a nation in becoming a nation-state came to be considered a con-

dition for its attainment of health, a measure of its normality.

These four factors came to exercise a joint impact on the evolution of the idea of Arab unity, precisely when that idea freed itself from the initial impulses of rejection and restoration and from the limited territorial scope which had characterized its infancy, and when it consequently became capable of growing, in accordance with its own logic, in the very direction to which those four new factors pointed—namely, towards the identification of the idea of Arab unity with the idea of Arab nationalism. It was in this guise that the idea appeared in its youth.

4

By the 1930's, the Arab mind had come to apply itself energetically to the definition of Arab national identity and to the exploration of the determinants and marks of Arab nationhood.

Arab thinkers embarked on these inquiries in an effort partly to satisfy an intellectual curiosity about their national identity; and partly to defend the idea of Arab nationalism against the onslaught of non-Arab nationalist ideologies of a particularist and provincial nature, or to distinguish between Arab nationalism and the quasi-nationalist implications of some movements of Islamic revivalism.

Such speculation reflected the earnest desire of the new Arab generation to find itself, to identify itself in the world of nations. A generation of Arabs was coming into its own without any direct experience or vivid memory of past Arab unity, even in the Fertile Crescent; and this same generation was growing, and had passed its formative years, within an Arab World which had been fragmented for two decades, but which nevertheless was witnessing greater intra-Arab mobility and communication than ever before.

The speculation of this new generation produced a nationalist ideology based on the doctrine of an Arab nation-in-being.

The different theories about the determinants of Arab nation-

hood which emerged from the search and speculation of this generation agreed with one another, to a very large degree, concerning both the factors which were cited as instrumental in contributing to Arab nationhood or as indicative of the existence of an Arab nation, and the factors which were excluded as irrelevant to the determination of national identity. Variations among those theories revolved largely around the respective significance which each theory attached to a given factor in relation to other factors, not around the identity of those factors.²

There was unanimous agreement that community of *language*, *culture*, and *history* among Arabs had contributed to the formation of the Arab nation, and now marked the Arabs and distinguished them as a nation from others. Less widespread, but nonetheless common, among Arab nationalist theorists was the assertion that the subjective factors of *consciousness* and *volition*—namely, the awareness of Arabs that they were Arabs, and their determination to be identified as such—deserved a place in the list of determinants and indices of Arab nationhood. Some pointed also to the uninterrupted *geographical continuity* of the Arab homeland and the contiguity of its territories in vindication of their assertion that an Arab nation, with a clearly-demarcated homeland, existed.

Just as important as the general agreement on the main components of Arab nationhood, was the wide agreement on those elements which did not merit being considered determinants of nationhood in general, or did not apply to the Arab situation in particular. For example, most Arab nationalist theorists disavowed the racist doctrines of nationalism, and excluded *racial origin* from the catalogue of ingredients of Arab nationhood.

² A fair analysis of the findings of Arab nationalist theorists concerning the determinants of Arab nationhood may be found in Nuseibeh, H. Z., *The Ideas of Arab Nationalism*, Cornell University Press, 1956, pp. 65-97. To the reader who is unfamiliar with the Arabic language, these pages furnish a systematic analysis and adequate summary of recent Arab thought on Arab nationhood.

The only controversial element in Arab nationalist thought was *religion*. Arab nationalist theorists have differed widely in their assessment of the role of Islam—as a faith and, more significantly, as an outlook on socio-political organization—in shaping Arab society and consolidating the Arab nation. Their differences revolved not only around the role actually played by Islam in the past, but also around the proper place which Islam should have in the future as a component of Arabism.³

5

By the end of the 1930's, the idea of Arab unity had journeyed towards its final form. It had come to rest in the doctrine which at that time enjoyed wide acceptance among the Arabs—the *doctrine of an Arab nation-in-being*.

The idea of unity had become securely anchored in this Arab nationalist doctrine. From the principles of this doctrine, the idea was to derive its postulates; within the context of the doctrine, the idea was to formulate its goals.

The central thesis of doctrine and idea alike was the principal assertion of the credo of nationalism in general: Nationhood begets nation-statehood as *naturally* as the seed in the soil begets the plant, and the plant the flower.

The nation-state is the *natural* political expression of the socio-ethno-cultural national community. Statehood (and its essential condition, unity) is the political manifestation, in the *normal* course of events, of nationhood (and its essential social condition, national unity). A nation-in-being, enjoying accomplished nationhood, is the foundation, the underlying reality, the substratum; the nation-state is the political structure, actualizing the potentialities of the nation, imparting to it form, organizing it for orderly action, regulating its life, guarding its interests, enabling its population to operate in unison and harmony both

³ In the next chapter, we shall examine the ambiguity of the Arab national movement with respect to the place of Islam in Arabism.

internally and in the world at large. The nation-state is the *natural* fulfillment of the nation-in-being.

Nations-in-being strive for nation-statehood as *naturally* as the feeble long for strength and the sick for health, or as the maimed yearn for wholeness.

The natural correspondence of nation-states to national entities, which is the norm in the natural order, is not fully realized in the contemporary international setting. Too numerous are the instances in which the norm is violated. In an imperfect world, the normal and the common are not synonymous. But the claim of the normal to realization is not refuted by sheer denial. Natural rights are not invalidated by being ignored. If normality is the condition in which natural patterns are permitted to unfold themselves freely, and in which natural bents fulfill themselves unhampered unto the enthronement of the natural order, then the normal is more closely akin to the natural and the ideal than it is to the common.

The fragmentation of a nation into multiple political units—whether coexisting as separate sovereignties, or as parts of nationally-heterogeneous structures, or as wards of alien sovereignties—is therefore an abnormality, a desecration of the natural order, an exception to the norm crying for correction and normalization.

* * *

The idea of Arab unity was an application of these general principles of nationalism to the Arab situation.

The Arabs were a nation-in-being; but they were awaiting the erection of their nation-state. The idea of Arab unity was the mental-emotional expression of this aspiration. The idea of Arab unity asserted the actual existence of the Arab nation, and defined its natural political desideratum. In it were postulated the actuality of Arab nationhood, the propensity latent therein for

nation-statehood, and the natural surge of the Arab nation towards statehood.

The idea of Arab unity proclaimed that the Arabs were one nation, joined together by the common bonds which determine nationhood. It also proclaimed that political unity was the hoped-for, natural fulfillment, on the political plane, of the Arabs' existing national unity.

It envisioned political unity as the natural condition of *health*; disunity, as the state of sickness.

It viewed political unity within an Arab nation-state as a natural *right* vested in the Arab nation by virtue of its nationhood.

It saw the existing political disunity as a sign of the uncompleted fulfillment of the Arabs' legitimate national aspirations. It asserted that the Arab national cause would remain an unaccomplished task as long as unity was not achieved—even if independence were to be attained by every Arab people in its respective territory and even if Arab life were to be blissfully bettered and fecundated.

Arab unity was therefore craved as the ideal-normal situation towards which Arab society should advance in accordance with its natural rights and propensities. Contemporary political disunity was pronounced an abnormality which should be rectified.

The idea of Arab unity, in the view of its adherents, needed no other justification than that which is inherent in the natural aspiration of the unnatural for the natural. Nor was a more potent motive needed for the pursuit of Arab unity than the intrinsic appeal of normality and health.

6

Let us now pause, at the close of our ideo-historical survey of the evolution of the idea of Arab unity, to compare the idea as it emerged at the end of the process with its antecedent forms.

1. *Latent Stage:*

In the Nineteenth Century Arab awakening, the idea of unity was implicit and potential. To the extent to which Arab unity was a fact in the area in which the Arab revival was then taking place, unity was assumed and taken for granted. To the extent to which the revival was essentially cultural and spiritual, political themes were recessive; the main concern of the Arab movement was in revitalizing the spiritual life of the Arabs. But, to that extent, the concept of the Arab community, whose past legacies were being unearthed and whose cultural values were being enriched, was coextensive with the Arab World: the concept of the Arab community was pan-Arab in scope.

In the beginning, therefore, the idea of Arab unity, inarticulate and rudimentary though it was, was characterized chiefly by a creative impulse and a range of vision reaching to the limits of the Arab World.

2. *Conception:*

Political unity became a conscious goal of the Arab movement in the aftermath of the First World War. In the early stages of its evolution, the character of this idea was largely determined by the immediate circumstances which generated it.

Alarmed by the portents of future dismemberment of what was until then a united territory, the Arabs opposed the designs of the Allies and strenuously resisted their efforts to put those schemes into effect. Thus, in the period from 1918 to 1922, which we have designated the period of conception of the idea of Arab unity, a clear demand for political unity was voiced. It was a demand for the preservation of an existing unity; and it was animated by the Arabs' loathing for the forces which conspired to destroy it and their detestation of the Allies' betrayal of principle and pledge, as much as it was inspired by devotion to unity as such. The territorial range of the unity then de-

manded was confined to the borders of the area whose existing unity was then in jeopardy.

3. *Birth:*

The final imposition upon the Arabs of the post-War settlement by the Allies in 1922 created a new situation in which unity was formally destroyed. The former demand that existing unity be preserved gave way to the desire that that unity, now no longer a reality, be restored.

It was at that juncture that the idea of unity was born. Thenceforth, the idea of political unity was to remain a principal element of the Arab national cause. What had been merely implicit and potential in the Arab awakening of the Nineteenth Century, was to become articulate and supremely important in the politically-conscious Arab movement of the post-World War I era.

4. *Infancy:*

In impulse and scope, the newborn idea was marked by the character of the preceding period of conception. The restoration impulse was akin to, and virtually a variation of, the rejection-impulse. And the idea's territorial scope continued to halt, as in the period of conception, at the bounds of the territory whose unity had just been destroyed.

5. *Youth:*

While the idea of political unity as such survived the first few years of the post-World War I era, the character acquired by that idea in its infancy was to be outgrown in later life. In evolving into maturity, the idea cast off the attributes of its childhood and returned to the spirit of its Nineteenth Century origins. The transition took place imperceptibly. As the Arab mind liberated itself from its preoccupation with the abhorrent post-War settlement, the idea was free to evolve in accordance with its inherent logic.

The scope of the idea of unity became *pan-Arab*, reflecting the spirit of the Nineteenth Century Arab awakening, as well as the new situation of intra-Arab mobility and communication and the budding Arab national consciousness.

The rejection and the restoration impulses, which animated respectively the periods of conception and infancy of the idea, were supplanted by a positive, creative, *normalizing* impulse. No longer was unity desired simply because it was already there and therefore should be protected against the onslaught of scheming outsiders; nor was unity demanded solely because it had existed previously and should therefore be restored in order that the harm done by others might be undone. Such essentially-retrospective reasoning, predominant in the two preceding periods, had been supplanted by the new positive rationale which was furnished by the nationalist creed, and which argued that nations had a natural drive towards statehood.

6. *Maturity:*

At the terminus of its journey, the idea of Arab unity had come finally into its own. From the turbulent years of the early post-World War I era it derived its organic life, but not its essential character. Of all the principles asserted in its childhood, the idea now preserved only one: the enthronement of political unity. Its other components were drawn from other sources. Its pan-Arab scope was derived from the vision of the Nineteenth Century Arab awakening, and was reinforced by the realities of the Arab situation in the post-World War I era. Its creative, normalizing impulse was derived from the nationalist creed.

The metamorphosis of the idea of Arab unity was now complete. Its evolution was at an end.

As a guiding star for national action, it was radiant and forceful, pointing clearly to the *direction* of the march. What it lacked was a *plan*, a map of the path and the terrain.

CRITIQUE OF THE IDEA OF ARAB UNITY

1

THE Arab thinkers who contributed to the formulation and evolution of the idea of Arab unity and the underlying doctrine of an Arab nation-in-being were largely engrossed in their inquiries into the roots, determinants and marks of Arab nationhood. Questions of methods and timing, forms and structures, and other aspects of the mechanics of action failed to commend themselves to the Arab mind as equally deserving of responsible deliberation.

In the literature of the inter-War period, we find scarcely a treatise on the form which Arab unity might take, the manner in which Arab unity might be realized, or the means through which its attainment might be accelerated. The Arab mind has produced fewer blueprints for Arab unification, than theoretical proofs of the existence of Arab national unity and arguments for the right to political unity; fewer programs for the practical embodiment of the idea of Arab unity in political structures,

than doctrines vindicating that idea in terms of Arab nationhood.

This imbalance may have been partly a response to the paramount need of the time—when a generation of Arabs was searching for its national identity, and when the prospects of practical unification in the then-foreseeable future were dim. Perhaps the imbalance may be attributed also to some peculiarity of the Arab mind as such. But, whatever the explanations, it cannot be gainsaid that the failure of the Arab national movement to concern itself with the mechanics of unity left the Arab World intellectually unprepared and ill-equipped to face the dramatic opportunity for unification when that opportunity first presented itself in the early 1940's.

The default of the intellectuals was to occasion the improvisation of statesmen when the time for action arrived.

2

Since it was assumed that the desire for political unity emanated naturally and inevitably from the actual existence of socio-cultural, national unity; and since it was recognized also that, as a matter of historical experience, the political fragmentation of the Arab World had been brought about by foreign powers in accordance with foreign interests, it was implicitly believed by Arab nationalists that the attainment of independence would remove the obstacles to political unity and destroy the artificial barriers erected by foreign rule between one Arab land and another. That this argument was largely an oversimplification apparently did not disturb many Arab nationalists. Indeed, it was not until the late 1940's that this reasoning was destined to reveal its naïve simplicity and over-optimism to Arab nationalists, shaking their complacency and stirring them into further reexamination of their postulates. We shall examine the occasion for that future disillusionment in later chapters.¹ At this stage we shall content ourselves with the examination of the

¹ Chapters VIII-X.

inherent deficiencies of the idea of Arab unity as it evolved between the First World War and the Second.

Attributing Arab disunity solely to foreign influences, and assuming that, therefore, the banishment of these influences would, as a matter of course, immediately inaugurate the march towards unity, the architects of the Arab nationalist ideology underestimated the disruptive political forces latent within Arab society itself, and the built-in factors of diversity coexisting with the factors of community in the Arab World.

The centrifugal forces drawing the Arab World away from unity, the rivalries among Arab rulers, the discordant streaks in the Arab political canvas, the ingrained individualism and parochialism of the Arab character, and, indeed, the selfishness inherent in the imperfection of human nature as such and therefore in the Arab nature, failed to impress the mind of Arab nationalists—engrossed as they were in their idealistic speculations—sufficiently to pause and take notice. Assuming the paramountcy of idealistic considerations, Arab nationalists ignored many a factor which was destined, when the moment for action arrived, to assert itself to the disillusionment of these nationalists.

3

One further manifestation of the imbalance of the Arab outlook on nationhood and unity was the manner in which realistic and utilitarian arguments for political unity were largely dismissed from the thoughts of Arab nationalists as well as from their *apologias* for unity, until the late 1940's—when the first effort to create political unity had ended in thinly-concealed failure, and when complex political forces militating against outright political unification had demonstrated the futility of the reliance solely upon idealistic motives. Until that disillusionment was to awaken Arab nationalists, rudely, into a realization of the importance of utilitarian inducements, theretofore neglected in disdain, the Arab mind thought of unity solely in idealistic terms.

One has but to compare the *Federalist* Papers in American political literature with a typical Arab *apologia* for union produced in the 1930's and early 1940's, in order to realize the one-sidedness of the Arab outlook during the period under examination. The *Federalist* Papers, inasmuch as they dwelt upon the advantages of federation over the Confederation which had been tried and found wanting, invoked not only the ideal values inherent in unity as such, but also the utilitarian advantages—economic, military, and otherwise—to be secured by federation.

It must be mentioned, however, in explanation of the Arab default, that the *Federalist* Papers were written after the failure of the Confederation had become manifest, and after the political forces of disunity (given a free rein by virtue of the retention of a large measure of sovereignty by the individual American states) had exhibited their potential disruptiveness; whereas the Arab mind, in the 1930's and early 1940's, had had as yet no similar opportunity to learn the obvious. However, when Arab nationalists were exposed to the lessons of political reality, in the late 1940's—after the establishment of the League of Arab States—they evinced some readiness to take cognizance of the practical streaks in human nature, and to recognize the significance of utilitarian inducements and practical considerations arguing for union.

4

We have so far cited three inherent weaknesses of the idea of Arab unity: its vagueness as to form, and its general indifference to instruments and methods; its oblivion to disunifying political forces; and its scorn for utilitarian inducements. These three weaknesses may be jointly attributed to a psychological-existential attitude of the Arab mind; they equally reflect an imbalance in the Arab outlook on socio-political affairs, marked by preoccupation with ends to the exclusion of means, and by the overshadowing of realistic-utilitarian values by idealistic values.

But there was another weakness of the idea of Arab unity (and

of the underlying doctrine of an Arab nation-in-being) which arose not from the psychological-existential bent of the Arab outlook but from a theoretical deficiency in the Arab philosophy of politics.

This weakness was manifested in the failure of the exponents of the idea of Arab unity to take due cognizance of the real, objective, and stubborn elements of *diversity* in the Arab World. Such diversity as was grudgingly recognized by Arab nationalists was usually dismissed as irrelevant, or pronounced temporary and passing, or conveniently attributed to the historical experiences of the Arabs during the past century-and-a-half and promptly explained away as a legacy of the political fragmentation suffered by Arab society at the hands of others. Little readiness to grapple seriously with the problems created by authentic, rooted diversity was exhibited. The assumption was hopefully made that there was hardly a facet of the diversity of the Arab situation which could not be harmonized when unified political structures had an opportunity to administer their curative powers to the Arab body. Instead of being realistically adapted to take account of Arab plurality, the Arab concept of unity remained monistic. It continued to be wishfully postulated as the panacea whose beneficent influence would, in due course, triumph over all symptoms as well as all causes of Arab diversity.

5

If Arab nationalists could not reconcile themselves to the admission that there was real diversity in the Arab situation, it was because the doctrine of an Arab nation-in-being was unduly rigid and static, and because the political philosophy within the context of which that doctrine was formulated was not capable of simple, undifferentiated application to the Arab situation.

In the process of formulating its nationalist doctrine, the Arab mind had adopted uncritically the European political philosophy of nationalism, and applied it to the Arab situation without adaptation or adjustment. But the European phenomenon of

nationalism, the underlying socio-cultural institution of the nation, and the crowning political institution of the nation-state, had all evolved within a concrete European context. They had been made possible by distinctive European realities, experiences, traditions, and concepts. To apply the fruits of the European situation to the nonanalogous Arab situation, at a different stage of history, without basic differentiation and creative internal adaptation, entailed the risk inherent in the act of transplantation as such. The underestimation of this fact, and the resultant dereliction of the task of adaptation of the European-evolved criteria of nationhood prior to their application to the Arab situation, engendered—and indeed were bound to engender—many of the ideological paradoxes which bedevilled Arab nationalist thought, as well as some of the practical difficulties which disillusioned and chagrined Arab nationalists in the mid-1940's.

To illustrate: The criteria of nationhood, which were formulated in the political thought of Europe, were used as yardsticks whereby the nationhood of the Arab World was measured and established. But the use of these criteria soon proved to be a double-edged sword. For the selfsame determinants of nationhood—e.g., community of language, history, culture, and territory—in terms of which Arab nationalists proclaimed the doctrine of an Arab nation-in-being, were used by other Arabs to vindicate particularistic ideologies of nationhood, to proclaim multiple nationhood in the Arab World, and to assert that the Arab World constituted not one nation but a family of kindred nations. Thus, in the controversy between nationalistic monism and pluralism, both schools of thought committed one and the same error: the theories of both sides were based on the assumptions of the creed of nationalism as enunciated by European thinkers within the distinctively-European social-intellectual context.

A more creative Arab political philosophy would have evolved

if the Arab mind had adopted the European doctrine of nationalism more critically and more discriminately; and if it had impregnated itself by schooling in non-European traditions of political thought as well, and enriched itself by learning from the political experiences of non-European peoples. Particularly salutary would have been the assimilation of American political philosophy and the adaptation of American experiences to the Arab situation.

A more creative—or more critically assimilative—Arab political philosophy might have averted many of the difficulties which Arab nationalism in general, and the pursuit of Arab unity in particular, encountered.

In the first place, such a political philosophy might have produced a doctrine in which attention would have been focused on the aptitude and potentiality for national unity, instead of the postulated actuality of nationhood, as a point-of-departure for nationalist speculation and action. Neither an Arab nation-in-being, nor separate and distinct, albeit cognate, Arab nations-in-being, would have been postulated, but an Arab nation-in-becoming. The debate between nationalistic monism and pluralism would have manifested its superfluousness and irrelevance. For the root of all trouble was that both sides in the debate asserted that nationhood was already accomplished; and each side sought to vindicate its claim by recourse to the selfsame European-evolved criteria of nationhood. That which was a stumbling-block to the pluralists and an embarrassment to the monists—namely, diversity—would have played an entirely different role within the context of a dynamic theory of nationhood which asserted the *potential* existence of an Arab nation.

In this respect, American experience and thought would have been more directly applicable to the Arab situation than the experience and speculation of Europe. For the American situation of heterogeneity-in-harmony was more directly analogous to the Arab conditions; and the experiences of Americans in

promoting American nationhood despite initial diversities would have been more relevant than European experiences to the tasks of Arab nationalism, and therefore more edifyingly instructive to the Arab mind.

In the second place, such a political philosophy as is here suggested might have enabled the Arab mind to realize more clearly the dialectical relationship between unity and diversity. Diversity would have been envisioned as not necessarily an evil. Unity would have been envisaged and pursued not as a natural fulfillment of the propensities latent in a nation-in-being, i.e., an existing nation whose already accomplished nationhood was postulated—as the European political philosophy, uncritically accepted by the Arab mind, led Arab nationalists to proclaim. Instead, unity would have been viewed as a desirable political instrument for accelerating the accomplishment of nationhood in the future—by taming such disruptive influence as diversity exercises, and by promoting common interests capable of counteracting the pull of existing centrifugal forces, much in the same way in which federation in the United States produced an American nation out of formerly-potential nationhood.

In other words, if it had become the doctrine generally accepted by the Arab mind, the vision of fluid, potential nationhood (or of a nation-in-*becoming*) would have created a corresponding, flexible idea of unity. Existing plurality would not have been dismissed as unreal and entirely undesirable. It would have been recognized that, by taking due cognizance of diversity, over-all unity would be more capable of transcending and subordinating the disruptive effects of diversity, while at the same time preserving and cherishing its wholesome, enriching values.

In the third place, had Arab nationalist thought moved in these directions, entertaining a dynamic concept of *diversity-in-unity* based on a dynamic doctrine of a *nation-in-becoming*, it would have also evinced greater interest in the *federal formula*

of *political unification*, and in exploring its applicability to the Arab situation.²

* * *

This train of hypothetical speculation, however, does not dim the fact that, as it evolved between the two World Wars, the idea of Arab unity was generally expressed in terms of simple, un-diversified unification; and that the doctrine of nationhood was expressed in terms of a static, accomplished reality, an Arab nation-in-being. These theoretical shortcomings of Arab nationalist thought, operating in partnership with the deficiencies and imbalance of the psychological-existential outlook on politico-social development, conspired against the success of the first organized attempt of the Arab World, between 1943 and 1945, to create an Arab political union.

6

One final shortcoming of Arab nationalist thought must now be cited. It pertains to the ambiguous place of Islam in Arabism.

It will be recalled that the formation of the Arab nation had its beginnings in the Muslim-Arab conquests of the Seventh Century A.D. Those conquests heralded two cognate processes, islamization and arabization, which permanently transformed the character of the conquered peoples and stamped some of them indelibly with the marks of Arabism.³

But while the two processes of islamization and arabization were set in motion by the same events, they were by no means identical in import; nor were they equal in reach. Many peoples

² The author has explored the ideas of diversity-in-unity and of an Arab nation-in-becoming more fully in *Understanding the Arab Mind* (Organization of Arab Students in the U.S.A., New York, 1953) and in *Risalat al-Mufakkir al-Arabi* (*The Message of the Arab Intellectual*, Al-Ahad, Beirut, 1955), respectively.

³ See *above*, Chapter II, Section 2.

were islamized without being arabized; some communities were arabized without adopting Islam.⁴ As a result, we now have a situation in which not every Muslim is an Arab nor every Arab a Muslim.

Islamization and arabization, then, were neither identical nor inseparable. But the problem does not end here. For the essence of the experience of arabization involved a measure of "indirect islamization," as it were, which has continued until today to affect the concept of Arabism. The complex relationship between Arabism and Islam rests upon several factors.

In the first place, the rise of Islam occasioned the consolidation of the Arabian tribes of the Peninsula and motivated the Muslim-Arab incursions of the Seventh Century A.D. Islam, therefore, was the decisive factor which stirred and shaped those historic events which marked the transition of Arab history from being the history of *Arabian tribes in the Peninsula* into becoming the history of *arabized Near Eastern peoples throughout the Arab World*. Islam accordingly marks the beginning of "Arab," as distinct from "Arabian," history and nationhood. As a historical event, the rise of Islam gave birth to the circumstances which generated Arab nationhood as it is experienced today.

In the second place, Islam was the only indigenous element, apart from their language and literature, which the Arabs furnished from their Peninsular heritage to the civilization and culture which flourished in the Arab World after the Muslim-Arab invasions under the aegis of the Arabs.

In the third place, Islam as a religion encompasses more than mere theological dicta and ethical precepts; it embraces principles of socio-political organization, with direct relevance to almost all aspects of the daily life of all members of a society permeated by the spirit of Islam.

As a result of these three factors, a dialectical relationship between Arabism and Islam has obtained ever since the begin-

⁴ See *above*, Chapter II, Section 3.

ning of Arab nationhood. No Arab, Muslim or non-Muslim, can fail to realize that the generative event and the point of departure of his national history was the rise of Islam, and that Islam permeated the legacy of the civilization built by the Arabs in the golden periods of their history, as well as the social, political, and cultural fibres of Arab life today. Islam, then, is a potent element of Arabism and a unifying factor in Arab society; and, as such, Islam is a partial determinant of Arab nationhood.

Nevertheless, the distinctness and separability of islamization and arabization forbid the identification of Arabism with Islam.

Furthermore, it was not the Islamic-puritanical revival led by the Wahhabis in the Arabian Peninsula in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries that evolved into the Arab national movement of the Twentieth Century. Nor was it the Islamic reformers in Egypt and the Fertile Crescent who were the forerunners of the Arab nationalist leaders and seers of today. It was, rather, the Nineteenth Century Arab awakening of the Fertile Crescent, voiced and led by secular Muslim and Christian writers and theorists, and stirred by Western stimulants, that evolved into the Arab national movement of the Twentieth Century.

Moreover, it was not to the Islamic institutions and forms of social organization of the classical periods of Arab history that the Arabs of the Twentieth Century turned for inspiration in the formulation of their concepts of nationalism, but to the institutions and forms of social-political organization evolved in Europe. The Arab national movement has articulated its goals and aspirations in terms of concepts derived from European systems of life and speculation. The separation of Church and State and the secularism of the social-national community, alien though they were to Islam and Muslim traditions, have nevertheless pervaded the Arab national movement, and have inspired the utterances of its spokesmen if not the actual accomplishments of its practical leaders or the feelings of its mass supporters.

The ambivalence of Arab nationalism, as regards the place of Islam in Arabism, is manifested in the dissonant elements we have just cited. On the one hand, Islam is an essential ingredient of Arabism despite the logical distinctness and the actual historical separability of the two processes of islamization and arabization. On the other hand, the Arab national movement reflects the aspiration of Arabs of all faiths to establish a secular Arab society consolidated by the community of language, culture, history, and territory, and animated by a desire for national freedom, political unity, and human progress of which all Arabs will be beneficiaries and for the attainment of which all Arabs have struggled and will struggle, regardless of their faith.

Few Arab nationalist theorists have thought out the ambivalence of their movement to its logical conclusions. This may be partly due to the fact that, in general, the Arab national movement has produced no nationalist philosophy of its own, but has borrowed and uncritically applied to the Arab situation certain concepts evolved within the historical experience and speculative systems of Europe. In fact, this default, which has generated many significant hiatuses in Arab nationalist thought, is itself a manifestation of a more important fact pertaining to the modern Arab awakening as a whole: namely, that in their modern rebirth the Arabs have singled out certain products of Western civilization (e.g., science and technology, and concepts of socio-political organization), isolated them from the total organic context in which those products grew and of whose general spirit they essentially partook, and applied them to Arab life by superimposing them upon the structures of Arab existence and thought, without in the meantime creatively transforming the material or spiritual substratum of Arab life into consonance with the superimposed crust. The selective absorptiveness and the creativity displayed by the Arabs in the golden ages of their civilization-producing past have so far had no counterpart in the modern Arab awakening. It may be too early as yet for the task of creative transformation of traditional Arab outlooks to

have revealed its imperativeness as a prerequisite for the grafting of certain elements of Western civilization into Arab life. Perhaps the existential strains of ambivalence have to be agonizingly experienced before the imperative need for that creative transformation is acknowledged, not to say met and satisfied.

Perhaps only when the desultory stirrings already felt within Islam, aiming at a revitalizing reform, have finally produced a generally accepted reinterpretation of Islam, less inspired by the conventional forms which Islam has assumed in its dark ages than by the original purity of its earliest manifestations, may the ambivalence of Arabism give way to an Arab nationalism devoid of social-political Muslim ingredients. Or, perhaps the resurgence of traditional Islam, embodied today in such movements as the Muslim Brotherhood in its infinite variations, and animated largely by political reaction to the political deeds or misdeeds of the West, may eventually suffocate the secular ideas of nationalist Arabism and emphasize the Islamic ingredients inherent in its origin and somewhat dormant in its present reality. Or, too, perhaps the currently noticeable waning of the sway of traditional Islam over the hearts of the younger generation of Muslim Arabs may generate conscious forms of secularism out of religious indifferentism or perhaps even militant agnosticism, and thus disengage Arabism from the ingrained Islamism at the root of its currently subconscious ambivalence. Or, finally, it may be that, without any change in Islam or Muslims—whether towards reformation, or towards a resurgence of traditionalism, or towards dilution and indifference culminating in agnosticism—the pragmatic nature of the modern Arab awakening, which has so far proved capable of adopting different elements derived from diverse traditions and employing them in meeting momentary exigencies without seeking to reconcile them within harmonious speculative systems, may enable Arab nationalism to survive the ambivalence pertaining to the place of Islam within Arabism without experiencing serious strains or agonies. What-

ever happens, however, must depend on developments less connected with the ideas of Arab nationalism and Arab unity than with Islam and its place in the mind and heart of Muslims. In the meantime, a semi-conscious ambivalence continues to characterize the idea of Arab nationhood and, therefore, the idea of Arab unity as well.

PART THREE

THE IDEA OF ARAB

UNITY IN ACTION

ENTER:**THE IDEA OF ARAB UNITY****I**

IF the evolution of an idea is in some measure autonomous, its ingression into practical reality, via purposeful human action, exposes it to influences to which it was relatively impervious in its ideal existence, and subjects it to determinants against which it often stands defenseless. Matter and will; tradition and prejudice; self-interest and fear; emotion and loyalty; habit, inertia and indifference—all these factors generate and set in motion socio-political forces which mercilessly bend or twist reality in accordance with their own logic. Society is seldom, if ever, sculptured, or history shaped, by an idea performing its role—whether creative, formative, or regulative—in safe immunity from the influence of those forces. Far from operating in seclusion, an idea must encounter and contend with those multi-form forces in the course of realizing itself in practical reality.

When the idea of Arab unity entered the field of action, it met the universal fate of all ideas.

It found itself hemmed in by other ideas, of a particularistic, non-Arab nationalist nature, denying it free play. It also encountered diverse conceptions of unity, differing in the territorial range to which they applied or in the measure of unification they recommended.

It found the society it sought to shape swayed by a wide variety of political forces: centrifugal forces pulling in the opposite direction, and a complexus of affinities or animosities working at cross-purposes with one another as well as with the idea of pan-Arab unity.

In addition to the natural resilience of social reality, the rivalry of other ideas, and the opposition of multiple socio-political forces, the inherent weaknesses of the idea of Arab unity itself, becoming apparent as soon as the idea was put to the acid test of action, hampered its self-realization. In the process of formulation and evolution, it will be recalled, the idea had been oblivious to all questions pertaining to the mechanics of implementation, and had failed to take due notice of the elements of diversity inherent in the Arab situation. These inner deficiencies were destined to affect adversely the ingression of the idea into Arab life.

* * *

As a result of all these factors, the first effort to incarnate the idea of Arab unity in a concrete political structure produced an organization which was at best a distant offspring and a faint image of the idea.

The League of Arab States, as this Organization was called, was a compromise. It was the resultant of various forces, interests, and persuasions which confronted one another on the Arab stage, from 1943 to 1945, when Arab statesmen deliberated, in bilateral and multilateral consultations, on how to organize intra-Arab relations in a permanent institution.

In fact, it was not *unity* at all that the League manifested or

engendered: it was merely the capacity to *coordinate* the policies and measures of its member-states, whose sovereignty was to be preserved intact within the loose structure of the League.

No wonder, then, that, when the League was established, the champions of Arab unity displayed less enthusiasm for the Organization than did the advocates of loose inter-governmental arrangements, less binding than political unity.

Before we proceed to tell the story of the establishment of the League, and to analyze its structure and record, let us examine the diverse forces, ideological and political, which hampered the full realization of the idea of Arab unity in the mid-1940's.

2

When the time for action drew near, the idea of Arab unity did not have a free field. It was not the only idea entertained by the Arab mind concerning the possible or the ideal relations among the Arab countries. Nor was the doctrine on which it was based, namely, the nationalist doctrine of an Arab nation-in-being, the sole persuasion of the Arabs concerning their national identity. Other ideas and doctrines commended themselves to certain groups of Arabs.

Some of these alternative conceptions were utterly incompatible with the postulate of Arab nationhood and the ideal of Arab unity. Others, while not entirely irreconcilable, were nonetheless at odds, in one respect or another, with the ideology of *al-Uruba* (or pan-Arabism, as the doctrine of Arab nationhood and the idea of Arab unity had come to be jointly designated).

The alternative ideologies differed also in degree of effectiveness, relatively to one another or to pan-Arabism. With few exceptions, the range of their appeal was largely confined to isolated segments of the intellectual or sophisticated circles; they lacked the emotional appeal capable of stimulating sustained, wide response in the heart of the people at large. Many of them suffered from the fact that they had been initially, and had remained, academic expressions of a defensive posture; they were

characterized more by fear of pan-Arabism than by positive dedication to a socio-political ideal. Quite a few tended to become esoteric creeds, and ended in an impotent state of self-segregation.

These alternative ideologies were invariably particularistic in nature,¹ attributing national identity and status to the population of one Arab country or another, or even to the people of one sector of an Arab country, and tracing the origin of the postulated nationhood to an ancient period at which an antecedent Near Eastern people or civilization had flourished, prior to the Muslim-Arab incursions of the Seventh Century A.D. and the consequent arabization of the Arab World. Thus, the doctrines of Egyptian, Syrian, or Lebanese nationhood derived their inspiration respectively from, and became partly identified with, the Pharaonic, Seleucid, or Phoenician periods of Near Eastern history in Egypt, Syria and Lebanon. Suffering from the relative ineffectiveness inherent in invoking ancient memories which bore little relation or relevance to the living present, these ideologies suffered also from the weakness inherent in particularism as such. Egyptian nationalism, by the nature of the case, could appeal only to Egyptians; Syrian or Lebanese nationalism, to Syrians or Lebanese. By contrast, pan-Arabism, pointing to historical traditions continuous with the present, enjoyed the advantage of having a recognizable and meaningful source of inspiration. At the same time, pan-Arabism partook of universalism within the Arab setting. It was able to address itself to all Arabs alike, as their national movement; it had adherents in all Arab lands; and it championed the common cause of all Arabs.

The only cause which the alternative particularist ideologies had in common was the pluralist concept implicit in the postulate of multiple-nationhood in the Arab World. But this was

¹ With one exception: namely, the quasi-nationalistic doctrine formulated by the diverse movements of Islamic revivalism. In the ideological clash between pan-Arabism and non-Arabist national doctrines, however, nationalist-Islamism invariably associated itself with pan-Arabism.

an abstract and formal concept. Skin-deep at best, this "common cause" of abstract pluralism was further enfeebled in practice by the mutual belittlement which the championing of the several nationalist doctrines necessarily entailed. For, in order to counter the appeal of pan-Arabism, a non-Arabist nationalist ideology in Egypt, Syria or Lebanon found itself constrained not only to unearth obscure historical events and unknown past contributions of the people whose nationhood it asserted, but also to claim for that people glories commonly attributed to other Arab peoples, and often to belittle the past greatness or the present vitality of these peoples. The pan-Arabist, on the other hand, could glory equally in the contributions of all Arab peoples. Even those achievements which had been made in the pre-Arab era were objects of pride for the pan-Arabist: for, in his view, the pre-Arab phase of Near Eastern history was but an overture to Arab history and a phase in the evolution of the subsequently-arabized, and now Arab, peoples.

Whereas particularist doctrines found themselves embroiled in mutual rivalries, pan-Arabism was able to derive reinforcement from those very findings and revelations which the particularist ideologies employed for mutual belittlement.

Despite the limited impact of the rival nationalist ideologies on the Arab mind, in comparison with the impact of pan-Arabism, however, the latter was nevertheless weakened as a result of the sheer existence of the former. For pan-Arabism had to recognize and meet the challenge of those ideologies at a time when it was struggling for self-clarification. And, compelled to contend with these alternative doctrines, pan-Arabism became largely defensive. Instead of recognizing and benefiting from whatever positive values and true insights were implicit in those particularist doctrines, pan-Arabism succumbed to the temptations ever-present in opposition and self-defense. It made blanket-rejections of the assertions of particularism, and denied all its claims.

In the process of destroying the popular effectiveness of par-

ticularist doctrines, pan-Arabism debilitated itself as well. For it closed its eyes not only to the measure of truth implicit in particularism, albeit one-sidedly enunciated, but also to the objective realities in the Arab situation in response to which particularism had arisen. It was to these realities of diversity and heterogeneity that particularist doctrines bore witness. Their testimony was indeed partial and one-sided, as well as exaggerated and out-of-context. But the error of pan-Arabism was that, in its eagerness to refute the witness and repudiate the testimony thereof, it permitted the exaggeration of a partial truth by an opponent to dim its own vision of the truth itself.

The tactics of self-defense rebounded to the detriment of pan-Arabism, even though the opponent was paralyzed in the process. For, in making a total rejection not only of the particularist doctrines but also of those aspects of the Arab situation which they represented, pan-Arabism denied itself an ideal opportunity to correct its own one-sidedness and to rectify its own oversimplifications. For, from the challenge of particularism, pan-Arabism could have derived greater insight into the Arab situation, and could have developed the capacity to understand that situation more adequately and to influence it more effectively.

3

It was not the opposition of other doctrines, however, that seriously hindered the full realization of the idea of Arab unity in the Arab World, during the first effort to unify the Arab states, between 1943 and 1945. Far more important than the challenge of other ideologies, was the opposition to unity which came from an array of political forces pulling in all directions. For that effort to unify the Arab states was made by representatives of governments, not by the Arab peoples or representatives of their ideological persuasions and deeper aspirations. The translation of the idea of Arab unity into concrete political structures was entrusted to officialdom. At the hands of official-

dom, the idea of unity took a different shape from that envisaged by the public. Representatives of governments, by the nature of the case, were sensitive to, and were swayed by, the push and pull of discordant governmental interests, inter-governmental rivalries, and mutual suspicions. The structure they erected was at least as much a product of these factors, and of the effort to reconcile them, as it was of the idea of of unity.

There was, in the first place, the disunifying force of vested political interests. Some segments of the ruling circles felt that they had a stake in the continued separateness of the countries in which they held power. Vested interests engendered a reluctance to dissolve the separate statehood of a given state, particularly in feudalistic-monarchic government systems where power was virtually held in perpetuity by the same groups.

There were, in the second place, dynastic rivalries and jealousies among some Arab monarchs, which conspired against the spirit of trust and mutual confidence requisite for unification. There was therefore a built-in readiness to listen attentively to the counsel of caution in the surrender of power or prerogative.

And there were, in the third place, traditional varieties of isolationism, generated initially by different circumstances or motives, but equally militating against outright unification. Reinforced by the selfishness of some and the rivalries of many, the isolationist concepts and policies succeeded in steadying the hands of the architects of intra-Arab structures, pulling them back whenever the advance appeared to approximate unification, and curbing their progress short of the threshold of unity.

In Yemen, isolationism was decreed partly by location and terrain and partly by traditional outlook evolved over the centuries.

In Egypt, the continued experience of separate existence and separate preoccupations for a century and a half had created a separatist brand of isolationism. This was reinforced by the awareness of the great disparity in size and attainment between Egypt and other Arab states. The Egyptian monarchy of the day

was more concerned with the "unity of the Nile Valley" than with larger Arab unity.

In Saudi Arabia, where Najd, Asir, Shammar and the Hijaz had been united in the new kingdom, a special internal situation, akin to that of no other Arab state, demanded domestic policies and systems appropriate to itself, and forbade uniformity in design or regime with the rest of the Arab World.

In Lebanon, deep suspicions had been aroused over the years. Inspired initially by sad memories of sectarian strife under the Ottomans, these suspicions were nurtured by the experience of autonomy enjoyed by the district of Lebanon from the mid-1860's until the retreat of Ottoman rule. These suspicions were compounded in the post-World War I decades by new fears. Since the French had detached four districts from Syria and attached them to the district of Lebanon to form "Greater Lebanon" in 1920, Lebanon feared lest irredentism might agitate for the truncation of the enlarged state.

All these varieties of isolationism, dissimilar in root and essence though they were, generated equal disinclination towards unity on the part of Arab officialdom. It was not unity as such that official governmental circles in the Arab states desired or pursued, but such forms of cooperation and political ties among the Arab states as would promote their common interests without impinging upon the sovereignty of individual states.

* * *

The single exception of a strong political force emanating from the high levels of government and working earnestly for unification was an exception which proved the rule.

The Governments of Iraq and Transjordan were animated by a forceful desire to achieve the unification of the territories of the Fertile Crescent. To that extent, their influence was exerted in the direction of unity. But, to the extent to which the unity they envisaged virtually halted at the bounds of the Fertile Cres-

cent, their influence was put in the service not of pan-Arab unity but of a "Fertile Crescent separatism" somewhat analogous to the "Nile Valley separatism" of the Egyptian Government of the day. In each instance, a region of the Arab World, with internal geographical continuity, was to be internally united; but the united region was to be only loosely associated with the rest of the Arab World.

The Iraqi-Transjordanian concept of Fertile Crescent unity was expressed, between 1943 and 1945, in two cognate projects, known as the "Fertile Crescent" and the "Greater Syria" schemes, and put forward by Nuri as-Said, then Prime Minister of Iraq, and Abdullah, then amir of Transjordan, respectively. The Greater Syria project had been proposed intermittently before 1943, and was to be proposed on many occasions after 1945. But it is the impact of these projects on the conversations for Arab unity held by representatives of the various Arab states between 1943 and 1945 that concerns us here.

It will be observed that the authors of the two projects, and the ruling circles of Iraq and Transjordan which they represented, were the spiritual descendants of the leadership of the Arab Revolt of 1916. Both Abdullah and Nuri as-Said had played an active role in the Revolt. The former, as a son of Husain, had started negotiations with the British Government at the outset of the First World War, had led contingents of the Arab Revolt forces, and had served as the first foreign minister of the Kingdom of the Hijaz when his father was proclaimed king. As-Said had been a member of the secret nationalist society, *al-Ahd*, of Ottoman days, which had been composed of Arab officers of the Ottoman army; and he had joined the Arab forces shortly after the Revolt was launched. Both men were steeped in the outlook on Arab unity dominant in the days of the Revolt. Both men were dedicated to the cause of Hashemite suzerainty in the Arab areas the unification of which they proposed.

Never formally abandoned by Abdullah or as-Said, the conception of Arab unity which had been implied in the Arab

Revolt and had been inactivated after the First World War was resurrected during the Second World War, particularly when Arab officialdom entered into formal deliberations over future Arab unity. But the resurrection of the old idea of unifying the Fertile Crescent and portions of the Arabian Peninsula under Hashemite leadership had become, in the years which had intervened between the two World Wars, inapplicable to the Peninsula—where the Saudis had ousted the Hashemites from the Hijaz and created the new Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the version of Arabism initially implicit in the Arab Revolt, when it came to be revived during the Second World War, was confined to the Fertile Crescent.

Apart from minor details and some differences in emphasis, the two expressions of this revived conception were virtually identical in provision and import.

The Greater Syria and the Fertile Crescent schemes laid primary emphasis on the reunification of geographical Syria, comprising what had come to be known as the Republics of Syria and Lebanon, as well as Palestine and Transjordan. Both allowed for some measure of autonomy for the area of the former district of Lebanon of Ottoman days. Both contemplated the possibility that reunited Syria might take the form of a Syrian Federation or a United Syrian State. Both left the final decision, as to form of unification (whether federal or unitary) and the form of government (whether monarchic or republican) to the choice of the people.

If the unification of Syria was the crux of both proposals, the association of reunited Syria with Iraq, in a Fertile Crescent federation, was considered imperative in both projects. As-Said's proposal envisaged an "Arab League" composed of Iraq and United Syria and vested with the prerogatives of a federation; Abdullah spoke of a "Fertile Crescent Federation."

Outside the scope of the Fertile Crescent, both projects envisaged no more than "loose association" among the Arab countries. Abdullah spoke of an "alliance" or a "loose confedera-

tion," to which United Syria, Iraq, and Egypt might be parties; as-Said alluded to the possibility that "other Arab states" might join the "Arab League" (i.e., the federation of Iraq and United Syria) in the future.

The single difference between the two projects pertained to the identity of the head of the proposed reunited Syrian state. While as-Said was silent on this point, Abdullah openly presented his claim to the throne of the United Syrian State or, in case of federation, to the position of Head of the Syrian Federation.



The Governments of Iraq and Transjordan, then, unlike the governments of the other Arab states, eagerly pressed for unity—an authentic form of unity in which the sovereignty of participating member-states would be destroyed and transcended within a larger, new sovereignty. But the difference between the attitudes of the Hashemite Governments and those of other "isolationist" Arab governments existed more in appearance than in reality. For, taking their departure from the assertion that the Fertile Crescent was one organic territorial-demographic unit, the Governments of Iraq and Transjordan called for no more than a loose association between this unit and other Arab units. The internal unity they demanded for the Fertile Crescent was a far cry from the pan-Arab unity of Arab nationalist ideology. What pan-Arabism considered a mere step in the journey—and not a necessary step at that—the architects of Fertile Crescent unity schemes looked upon as virtually a terminus, at least under the circumstances of the day. From the standpoint of pan-Arabism, therefore, these two cognate Hashemite schemes, despite their contemplation of internal unity within the Fertile Crescent, failed to represent the hopes of Arab nationalism inasmuch as they called for the halting of the process of unification at the frontiers of the Fertile Crescent, and envisaged no tighter

ties between the united Crescent and other Arab territories than did the proponents of other varieties of isolationism or separatism in other Arab countries.

4

Vested interests in power and authority, mutual rivalry, and isolationist concepts of diverse origins and forms, converged on the scene when the representatives of Arab officialdom assembled to discuss Arab unity.

Thus, the idea of Arab unity, as formulated by theoreticians and upheld by the public, was unable to succeed in its first ingression into the Arab situation. For it did not make its debut onto an empty stage, where it could read its lines without interruption. It did not ingress into a political vacuum. On the contrary, the field was charged with political forces and pressures of many kinds. What with the inherent deficiencies of the idea itself (which we examined in the preceding chapter) and the contention of other ideologies (to which we have alluded in the present chapter), it was perhaps a foregone conclusion that the offspring—representing the compromises of political leaders, the reconciliation of multiform interests, and the mutual adjustment of diverse forces, instead of the general consensus of public opinion—would bear little resemblance to the parent-idea. The political cross-currents operating during the conferences represented the persuasions and interests of Arab officialdom, not the Arab peoples; therefore, the compromises, which determined the final product, bore little resemblance to the hopes of the peoples. The fruits of the discussions were as remote from the general aspirations of the peoples, as were their premises distant from the persuasions of the populations.

A wide gap separated officialdom from public opinion, as the literature of the day reveals. The manifestoes of political parties, the editorial opinions expressed in the press, the communications addressed to the conferees by individuals and groups, and the treatises of Arab thinkers testified with eloquent unanimity

to the distance between the views and attainments of officialdom, and the beliefs and hopes of the general public.

The main difference between the League of Arab States, on the one hand, and the structures hoped for by the Arab peoples, on the other hand, lay in the animating principle. The League, manifesting the political pressures and forces operating at the preparatory and constituent conferences, consecrated the principle of state-sovereignty, and enthroned it; the popular idea of unity demanded the destruction of separate sovereignty within a transcendent, unified edifice, which alone could exercise sovereign authority. Taking its departure from the proclamation of the ultimacy and inalienability of the sovereignty of its members, the maximum unification to which the League could aspire was the coordination of the policies and measures of member-states; the unification of their being was outside its purview or reach. If, as a compromise of diverse interests, the League represented the "common area of agreement" among the conflicting points of view, the highest unity it could embody was bound to be limited by a low ceiling indeed. The upper limit, beyond which the League could not rise towards unity, was to be set by those forces which were least eager for unification and most reluctant to surrender any of the prerogatives of state-sovereignty.

Since it was not to be an instrument of unity, the League had to content itself with being an instrument of inter-governmental cooperation. The power vested in it was the power to coordinate the activities of its member-states. Even this capacity was to be curtailed in practice by constitutional limitations, leaving each member-state immune from the injunction to comply with a decision unless it was unanimously adopted. While there was no formal "veto power" in the hands of any member on the adoption of resolutions, a virtual "veto power" was nevertheless held by every member in the implementation of resolutions.

It was because of these inherent shortcomings of the League that the stauncher supporters of the idea of Arab unity were

not only dissatisfied with, but also vehemently critical of, the new Organization. For they detected in it a twofold danger. In the first place, they feared the psychological consequences of the partial and nominal satisfaction of the desire for unity. They worried lest furnishing the semblance while withholding the substance would satisfy the hunger without providing nourishment—appeasing, instead of whetting, the appetite for genuine unity. In the second place, they worried lest the principle of sovereignty, enshrined in the Charter of the League and jealously retained and guarded by the member-states at the outset of their independent careers, might in the course of time become self-perpetuating. For they surmised that at a later stage it would be more difficult to surrender power and interest, after these had been exercised and enjoyed for some time, than it would be at the beginning.

THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

1

IT was after the Second World War had passed the midway mark that formal efforts to establish Arab unity, which were due to culminate in the founding of the League of Arab States, began to make themselves felt.

The popular desire for unity had been present and forceful for two decades. The timing of the mid-War efforts of Arab officialdom, however, was the result of many new circumstances.

Seven Arab countries had attained an adequate measure of self-determination by the early 1940's. It is true that, except for Saudi Arabia and Yemen, the emancipation of the other five Arab countries had remained incomplete. Nevertheless, they had achieved a degree of independence sufficient to enable them to conduct their relations with one another, if not with the rest of the world, without much direct interference from Britain or France.

Since the struggle for unity had been suspended, in the early

phases of the post-World War I period, pending the attainment of independence; and since the Arab nationalist movement had consistently maintained that the objective of unity would be pursued immediately after the objective of self-determination had been achieved, there was a natural compulsion in the early 1940's to the pursuit of unity.

In the course of the preceding decade, a number of treaties had been concluded among the Arab states, and had been hailed by Arab nationalists as a token of Arab brotherhood and as portents of future unity. Speaking of the 1930's, when "a definite trend towards closer relationship and cooperation between the Arab states can be discerned," Miss Najla Izzeddin states:

"On the official level, the trend expressed itself in the form of treaties of friendship and good neighborliness concluded between several Arab states. A series of agreements settling boundary disputes was reached between Saudi Arabia on the one hand and Iraq, Transjordan, and Yaman on the other. A Treaty of Arab Brotherhood and Alliance was signed in April 1936 between Iraq and Saudi Arabia. It expressed the need for cooperation and mutual understanding, arranged for the peaceful settlement of all differences, and provided for the exchange of cultural and military missions. Adherence to this Treaty, which Yaman joined in the following year, was open to any independent Arab state. In May 1936, Ibn Saud and Egypt became parties to a treaty which settled their differences. Another document of interest and significance is the Treaty of Taif, signed in May 1934, which ended the hostilities between Saudi Arabia and Yaman."¹

Antonius saw in this "chain of pacts and treaties which now bind the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to its neighbours" a special significance "from the point of view of the Arab national movement," not only because it "put an end to contentions and strife," nor only (as Izzeddin suggests) because it was a portent of intra-Arab arrangements to come, but also because "it opened up channels, which had hitherto been blocked, for cultural and

¹ Izzeddin, *The Arab World*, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

economic interpenetration and for the freer play of the forces which are slowly shaping the Arab future."²

Perhaps more important than the string of bilateral or multi-lateral treaties which in the 1930's had begun to tie the Arab states together, were the inter-governmental conferences held in the late 1930's for devising common policies, planning common action, or making common representation to outside Powers, with respect to specific Arab problems of concern to all Arabs, notably the Palestine Problem. The Palestine Revolt of 1936 furnished the first opportunity for concerted inter-governmental action by the Arab states, and set a precedent for many subsequent instances of pan-Arab, governmental concern and combined intervention on behalf of the Arabs of Palestine. Two pan-Arab conferences had been held in 1937 and 1938, when the British Government gave formal recognition to the right of the Arab states to act collectively with regard to Palestine, and invited the governments of Egypt, Iraq, Transjordan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen to participate in the London Round Table Conference of 1939.

The advent of the Second World War introduced new elements accelerating the process of inter-Arab cooperation which had already been set in motion and which had already expressed itself in treaties and conferences. Under the pressure of war, economic regionalism made a hopeful beginning in the Arab World. Even though it was dictated by economic and not by nationalistic considerations, and even though it was inspired and implemented largely by Britain and the United States and not by the Arabs themselves, wartime regional economic cooperation was conducive to the progress of thinking, within the ranks of Arab officialdom, in terms of coordination and union. To quote Miss Izzeddin once more:

"The necessities of war compelled the powers to view the Middle East as a unit. A regional organization, the Middle East Supply

² Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, *op. cit.*, p. 344.

Center, was established for the purpose of assuring the essentials of livelihood for the civilian population of the area within the framework of the requirements and exigencies of conducting a global war. Since it was imperative to save, as much as possible, shipping space, port capacity, and internal transportation for war supplies material, the shipment of civilian goods had to be drastically reduced. But as all the countries of the Middle East depended heavily upon foreign imports, this drastic reduction of imported supplies threatened the area with a serious shortage. It was necessary, therefore, on the one hand to develop as fully as possible the local resources and to arrange for their exchange between the various states, on the other hand to survey the essential needs which could not be locally supplied, to provide the required transport, and to assure equitable distribution.

"Thus the Middle East Supply Center, created by Great Britain in 1941 and coming under joint Anglo-American control in the following year, had to consider the Middle East as a single whole in ascertaining its needs and developing its potentialities. The Center arranged for regional conferences on economic problems in which the various governments participated.

"Apart from the experiences and knowledge pooled and exchanged at these meetings, the conferences showed the need, and the possibility, of organizing the Middle Eastern countries on a regional basis. From economic to political regionalism was a short step."³

Moreover, it was beginning to dawn on Arab officialdom that the existence of a permanent institution, within which points of view could be exchanged and common action could be designed and executed, would be to the advantage of every Arab country. In the preceding decades, the Arab peoples had had to wage their wars of independence separately. The only outside support received by a given Arab people, when it had been engaged in its struggle for liberation, had been largely restricted to demonstrations of sympathy and financial contributions. If such popular support could be supplemented by governmental assistance,

³ Izzeddin, *The Arab World*, *op. cit.*, pp. 320-321.

coming from other Arab governments in the form of diplomatic intervention and possibly military aid as well, the consummation of the struggle for freedom would take place more expeditiously and perhaps at lesser cost in human life and material fortune. The Franco-Arab crisis in Syria and Lebanon in 1943 was to testify eloquently to this truism.

Furthermore, it was surmised that the existence of a permanent forum for inter-governmental deliberation and planning would avert much of the improvisation and clumsiness which had been experienced in the pan-Arab parleys of 1937, 1938 and 1939 regarding Palestine, as well as the inevitable discontinuousness of planning and action resulting from the lack of a permanent organization with permanent agencies and staff.

Finally, many Arab leaders were beginning to develop responsible interest in the shape of the post-World War II world. An unmistakable trend towards regional organization in the world at large had already manifested itself in the speculation of thoughtful analysts and forecasters. Collective security, as a concept inspired by the facts of international life in an imperfect world, was there to stay. Theretofore, the security of the individual Arab states had been the concern of the ruling Powers, Britain and France; the era of Arab independence was to entail new Arab responsibilities. The thought of a pan-Arab system of collective security, within a framework of an inter-governmental organization of the Arab states, came naturally to mind.

2

Inter-Arab cooperation and coordination of policies and actions, already enjoying the whole-hearted support of the peoples and intellectuals dedicated to the idea of Arab unity, were persuasively suggesting themselves to Arab officialdom as well during the first half of the Second World War, even though the idea of actual political unification may have had as yet no corresponding appeal in official quarters.

Arab, governmental and popular, inclination towards pan-

Arab inter-governmental arrangements soon received aid and comfort from outside the Arab World. New international circumstances made such arrangements appear more possible than they had seemed before; and outside encouragement set the wheels of Arab diplomacy in motion. By an ironic twist of fate, these developments involved France and Britain, the two European Powers whose intervention two decades earlier had brought about the fragmentation of the Fertile Crescent, and whose actions in the preceding century had been largely responsible for the dismemberment of North Africa and the fringes of the Arabian Peninsula.

As might be suspected, France's role was negative and entirely unintentional. It was not what France did for the Arab cause that helped, however indirectly, promote Arab unity; it was what France suffered in Europe that removed some of the obstacles which the presence of France in the Middle East had erected in the path of unity. The speedy capitulation of France to Nazi forces; the rise of the collaborationist Vichy Government in France; the rallying of the French mandatory administration and military forces in Syria and Lebanon around Pétain instead of De Gaulle; the invasion of Syria and Lebanon by Allied forces from bases in Palestine and Transjordan; and the formal proclamation of General Catroux, on behalf of De Gaulle, of the independence of Syria and Lebanon after the War—these developments portended the speedy removal of French power from the eastern sector of the Arab World. With the exception of North African countries, then, every Arab country was expected to emerge, at the end of the War, either independent or subject to the hegemony of Britain.

While this process of elimination was simplifying the international-Power picture of the Arab mosaic, Britain, the only would-be surviving imperial Power in the Middle East, was undergoing a policy transformation with respect to Arab unity. Perhaps there were some officials in British policy-making circles who had felt some remorse on account of the British betrayal of

the Arabs after the First World War. Or perhaps more practical-minded policy-makers in Britain had recognized the loss sustained by British prestige and interests as a result of the alienation of the Arab peoples since 1918. Perhaps these factors wielded some influence in bringing about the change of policy towards Arab unity in Britain. Whether or not these assumptions were valid, however, it was certain that British policy-makers were being driven by the necessities and exigencies of the Second World War towards courting the favor of the Arab peoples and governments. What with the Nazi propaganda machine actively laboring to exploit Arab grievances and to stimulate anti-British and anti-French sentiment, and the outbreak of anti-British violence in Iraq under the leadership of Rashid Ali in April, 1941, ominously portending more widespread opposition to British interests, Britain decided to make a dramatic appeal to some value cherished by the Arabs throughout the Arab World. Being the fond hope of the Arab heart that it was, the idea of unity appeared to be an attractive instrument of Anglo-Arab reconciliation. Writes a British historian:

"In June 1940 Churchill had been warned by Lord Lloyd of the risk of ignoring pan-Arab discontent, but his reply was characterized by over-confidence. The Rashid Ali *putsch* came as a sharp lesson to the British Government, and their change of attitude was immediately reflected in Eden's statement at the Mansion House on 29 May 1941. . . . This statement was received with great satisfaction throughout the Arab World."⁴

* * *

Eden's statement of May 29, 1941 read, in part:

"The Arab world has made great strides since the settlement reached at the end of the last War, and many Arab thinkers desire for the Arab peoples a greater degree of unity than they now enjoy.

⁴ Kirk, George, *The Middle East in the War: Survey of International Affairs, 1939-1946*; Oxford University Press, London, 1953, p. 334.

In reaching out towards this unity they hope for our support. No such appeal from our friends should go unanswered. It seems to me both natural and right that the cultural and economic ties between the Arab countries, and the political ties too, should be strengthened. His Majesty's Government for their part will give their full support to any scheme that commands general approval."⁵

Eden's statement was a clear indication to Arab officialdom that the one foreign Power which was likely to continue to wield decisive influence on Arab life in the then-foreseeable future, and which had been associated in the Arab mind for two decades with the initial dismemberment of the Arab East as well as with the continued obstruction of Arab efforts at reunification, had abandoned its former opposition and had come to adopt an attitude of passive neutrality, if not mild sympathy, towards the idea of Arab unity.

The only immediate Arab response to Eden's statement came from amir Abdullah of Transjordan, who, on July 2, 1941, transmitted to the British Government a resolution which had been passed by the Transjordanian Council of Ministers on the preceding day requesting the reunification of geographical Syria. Abdullah also invited Oliver Lyttleton, upon his appointment as British Minister of State Resident in the Near East, to visit Amman to discuss the question of Syrian unity. The replies of the British Government furnished no positive support, save for the assurance that Britain would not obstruct Abdullah's endeavors towards the unification of Syria. His fear of possible British opposition having been allayed, Abdullah proceeded from then on to address his efforts to Syrian leaders directly, but without much success.

Until the end of 1942, the threat of direct involvement in the War hovered over the Arab World. Rommel's armies were advancing towards el-Alamain in North Africa, on Egypt's doorstep. The Allied position in general was far from secure. The attention of Arab statesmen was diverted from the immediate

⁵ *Ibid.*

Arab scene to the global situation. When the clouds began to lift, however, active interest in creating stable intra-Arab arrangements was revived, and Arab diplomacy was reactivated. Informal gatherings of Iraqi, Syrian, Lebanese and Egyptian leaders were held in Cairo in December, 1942, in which exchanges of points of view on Arab unity took place.

The initiative was then taken by Nuri as-Said, then-Prime Minister of Iraq. Early in 1943, he submitted to Richard G. Casey, British Minister of State Resident in the Near East, the famous "Blue Book" embodying his scheme for Fertile Crescent unity.

On February 24, 1943, Eden was questioned in the House of Commons on Britain's efforts to promote greater cooperation among the Arab states with a view to an ultimate Arab Federation. In reply, he asserted that "clearly the initiative . . . would have to come from the Arabs themselves" and added that, so far as he was aware, "no such scheme, which would command general approval, has yet been worked out."⁶ Nevertheless, nothing was said by Eden to indicate that Britain had reversed its recent policy of not obstructing Arab progress towards union.

The initiative was soon seized by Mustafa an-Nahhas, then-Premier of Egypt. His efforts, while encouraged by the non-obstruction assurances of Britain, were directed to the other Arab Governments, not to Britain.

On March 30, 1943, the Egyptian Premier informed Parliament that he had decided that steps should be taken by the Egyptian Government to explore the points of view of the other Arab Governments concerning unity and, as far as was possible, to harmonize them. He hoped, when this was done, to invite those Governments to send representatives to a meeting in Egypt, where exploratory discussions might begin. If it appeared that there was sufficient agreement among the Arab Governments, then a congress would be convened, to complete the examination of the question and take formal decisions.⁷

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 336. ⁷ *Ibid.*

3

In the course of the ensuing two years, Arab officialdom in the seven then-independent Arab states was active in building the new pan-Arab structure. This activity, culminating on March 22, 1945, in the promulgation of the Pact of the League of Arab States, passed through five stages:

The first stage consisted of a series of separate bilateral talks between the Premier of Egypt, on the one hand, and the Premier (or other high-level representative) of each of the six other Arab states, on the other hand. This stage lasted from July, 1943, until February, 1944. All participating Governments were represented by their Prime Ministers, save for Saudi Arabia (which was represented by the King's private secretary) and Yemen (which was represented by a cabinet minister).

At the second stage, the Preparatory Committee of the Pan-Arab Conference held its first session, which lasted from September 25 to October 7, 1944. The Committee was composed of the Prime Ministers (or other high-level representatives) of the seven Arab states, and a representative of the Arabs of Palestine. At the end of its session, the Committee proclaimed a Protocol containing the resolutions of the group and calling for the establishment of a League of Arab States. This Protocol of October 7, 1944, commonly known as the Protocol of Alexandria, defined the general purposes of the proposed League, and the principles of inter-governmental Arab cooperation. The drafting of the constitution of the League was entrusted to a sub-committee.

The session of the sub-committee comprised the third stage in the Arab discussions. Composed of the Foreign Ministers (or other representatives) of the seven signatories, and a representative of the Arabs of Palestine, the sub-committee convened from February 14 to March 3, 1945, and prepared a Draft Pact for the League.

The Preparatory Committee then convened its second session

in Cairo, from March 17 to 19, 1945. At this penultimate stage, the Draft Pact was revised and approved.

Finally, on March 22, 1945, the Preparatory Committee transformed itself into a Pan-Arab Conference, and approved and signed the Pact of the League of Arab States.

4

What was the nature of the League as an institution? What was its place in the evolution of the Arab national movement? And what was its historical value as an instrument of Arab unity?

The League was not a union. The formation of the League did not herald the unification of the Arab countries. The League was an inter-governmental multiple link between independent states, a locus for their interrelationships. But the relatees lost none of their independence-of-being in the process of entering into organized, permanent relations with one another within the League. The relatees remained ultimate and supreme; the relations were a derivative of the self-contained existence of the individual states. The League was a symbol of relations subsisting between sovereign states. It had no being of its own other than that derived from the being of its members. It was an association of real political beings, not a real political being in its own right; its very being was but the being of its members in a condition of interrelatedness. The League was not a state in itself; not a super-state; not a federation nor a confederation of states; and not a union of states—but merely a network of relationships among states.

This *negative-metaphysical* definition of the League must be read in conjunction with the corollary *negative-juridical* definition. The League had no powers of its own. Whatever power it had or could exercise was reflected upon it from the power inherent in the statehood of its members. The League was neither a center nor a source, but a pooling-house, of power and authority. All authority remained vested in the individual states.

The League, then, had no direct authority over the lives of

individual citizens in the individual states; such authority continued to rest solely in each state, and in its internal institutions.

Not only did the League have no power of its own; it had no derivative, delegated power either. There was no delegation of authority from the states to the League. The League was a forum for discussion, consultation and deliberation; the decisions were to be made by the representatives of the member-states, in their capacity as such. Power and authority in their entirety were retained by the states.

If, by virtue of its having no power of its own, the League could exercise no authority *directly* on the citizenry of the individual states, by not being vested with delegated powers the League lacked also the capacity to exercise *indirect* authority over the lives of the citizens of its members.

These negatives, pertaining to the metaphysical nature and the juridical competence of the League, reflect two essential facts about the creation of the League. *First*, the League was not created by a constituent assembly of peoples' representatives, who, as the ultimate source of power, could have vested power in the creature institution, assigning perhaps some powers to the League and reserving others for the individual states. On the contrary, the League was created by a conference of accredited representatives of sovereign states, acting exclusively in this capacity; it was created by states, not by peoples. And, *secondly*, the states which created the League withheld from it, in the process, both original and derivative authority. The states neither endowed the League with powers of its own, nor delegated to it certain categories of power which would have enabled it to act on their behalf. The states retained to themselves all powers and prerogatives of sovereignty.

What, then, did the League represent?

The League was *an instrument of coordination*. Even this assertion, however, must be read with caution, and understood in the light of two important qualifications.

The League was not empowered, whether by inherent or by

derivative capacities, to coordinate the policies and actions of its members; on the contrary, the members were to coordinate their own individual activities, or to agree on collective activities, through consultations among themselves within the League. The power to make decisions—on whether or not to coordinate a certain type of activity, and on the form of such coordination—was retained by the states.

Moreover, collective decisions made by the states were not to prevail over the freedom of an individual state. Only decisions approved unanimously by all states were to be binding on every state; majority decisions were not binding on non-concurring members. As we suggested once before, this was equivalent to the exercise by every member of the right to veto the compulsory *application* of a majority-decision *to itself*, even though no member enjoyed the right to veto the *adoption* of any decision *by others*, applicable solely to themselves. Article VII of the Pact of the League states:

“Unanimous decisions of the Council shall be binding upon all member-States of the League; majority decisions shall be binding only upon those states which have accepted them.

“In either case, the decisions of the Council shall be enforced in each member-State according to its respective basic laws.”⁸

In short: In creating the League, the individual Arab states created an association or an alliance, not a union; they withheld from the organization representing that association both inherent and derivative power; and they bound themselves in advance by no commitment with respect to their execution of decisions, save the commitment to implement whatever decisions they might approve during the discussions.

To the negative assertion we have now made, relative to the scope of self-commitment made by member-states, there are three inter-related exceptions:

⁸ The full text of the Pact may be found in *Basic Documents of the League of Arab States* (Document Collections, No. 1), Arab Information Center, New York, pp. 9-16.

1. An absolute pledge was made by each member to abstain from actions designed to alter the established systems of government of other member-states. Article VIII of the Pact of the League stipulates:

“Each member-State shall respect the systems of government established in the other member-States and regard them as exclusive concerns of those States. Each shall pledge to abstain from any action calculated to change established systems of government.”

2. The constituent states undertook not to employ force in order to resolve disputes arising among them. The opening clause of Article V of the Pact of the League declares that:

“Any resort to force in order to resolve disputes arising between two or more member-States of the League is prohibited.”

3. The member-states also undertook to abide by such decisions as might be adopted by the Council of the League by a majority vote for the settlement of an inter-state dispute, provided that the dispute did not affect the sovereignty or territorial integrity of the parties concerned, and provided that the disputants had recourse to the Council for attaining such settlement. Article V of the Pact of the League states:

“If there should arise among them a difference which does not concern a State’s independence, sovereignty, or territorial integrity, and if the parties to the dispute have recourse to the Council for the settlement of this difference, the decision of the Council shall then be enforceable and obligatory.

“In such a case, the States between whom the difference has arisen shall not participate in the deliberations and decisions of the Council . . .

“Decisions of arbitration and mediation shall be taken by majority vote.”

The first two limitations on the retention of absolute sovereignty by the constituent member-states were intended to protect the sovereignty of each member-state against attack from or inter-

vention by other member-states; and the third limitation represented the unanimous determination of all member-states to contain inter-state disputes, and to resolve them peacefully through the good offices of other member-states not parties to such disputes.

5

The Pact of the League superseded the Protocol of October 7, 1944. The Pact is, therefore, the only authoritative definition of the purposes, constitutional structure, and powers of the League. But a comparative analysis of the Pact and the Protocol is nevertheless instructive from the standpoint of our examination of the evolution of the League as an experiment in inter-governmental cooperation among the Arab states.

Four essential differences between the two documents may be detected, all of which indicate a process of *retrogression*, from the standpoint of the symbolization by the League of a desire for Arab unity, or the conduciveness of the League to such unity.

1. One binding commitment, limiting the freedom of member-states in the formulation of foreign policy, was contained in the earlier document (the Protocol) but deleted from the later document (the Pact). Paragraphs 4 and 5 of Section I of the Protocol⁹ provided that:

"... Every State shall be free to conclude with any other member-State of the League, or other Powers, special agreements *which do not contradict the text or spirit of the present dispositions.*

"In no case will the adoption of a foreign policy which may be prejudicial to the policy of the League or an individual member-State be allowed." (Italics added.)

These restrictive clauses do not appear in the Pact. The Pact, in alluding to the right of member-states to conclude agreements or treaties with non-members, abstains from making any limitations on the contents of such agreements, confining itself to the

⁹ The full text of the Protocol may be found in *Ibid.*, pp. 5-8.

assertion that no member-state shall be bound by agreements or treaties concluded by another member-state. Paragraph 2 of Article IX of the Pact states:

“Treaties and agreements already concluded or to be concluded in the future between a member-State and another State shall not be binding or restrictive upon other members.”

2. The authors of the Protocol viewed the League as a step in the direction of binding the Arab States by stronger ties, and expressed the hope that the League would grow into an instrument of greater unification. Section III stated:

“While expressing its satisfaction at such a happy step, the Committee hopes that the Arab States will be able in the future to consolidate that step by other steps.”

The authors of the Pact omitted this *anticipative, expectant* clause, and replaced it by a *permissive* clause (Article IX, paragraph 1), stating:

“States of the League which desire to establish closer cooperation and stronger bonds than are provided by this Pact may conclude agreements to that end.”

More than a change of emphasis was represented in this textual alteration, however. The substitution of the later for the earlier clause embodied also a substantive change. Whereas the authors of the Protocol had hopefully envisaged a gradual transformation of the League itself into a vehicle of greater cooperation, the authors of the Pact made it known that, should any member-states wish to establish among themselves relations entailing greater cooperation, the League would not obstruct their efforts, but the League would not be necessarily transformed thereby into an instrument of greater cooperation among all its members.

3. The same difference in tone, emphasis and aspiration was expressed in the opening paragraphs of the respective preambles

of the two documents. The Protocol opened with the following words:

"Anxious to strengthen and consolidate the ties which bind all Arab countries and to direct them toward the welfare of the Arab world . . ."

The Pact, on the other hand, was introduced with these words:

"Desirous of strengthening the close relations and numerous ties which link the Arab States;

"And anxious to support and stabilize these ties *upon a basis of respect for the independence and sovereignty of these States*, and to direct their efforts toward the common good of all the Arab countries . . ." (Italics added.)

Apart from the semantic significance implied in the substitution in the later document of the term "States" for the term "countries" appearing in the earlier text— (which has led at least one analyst to describe the Protocol as "a strongly *popular* document, appealing constantly to 'public opinion throughout the Arab world,' 'the Arab peoples,' and 'the Arab nation,' " and "infused with the spirit of popular Pan-Arabism"¹⁰), notice must be taken also of the phrase, "upon a basis of respect for the independence and sovereignty of these States," which was added in the Pact. The sovereignty of member-states was here enshrined in the very preamble of the Pact; the retention of sovereignty was explicitly asserted.

4. Whereas emphasis was made in the Pact on the ultimacy of state-sovereignty, and its non-alienation by member-states to the League was advertised, the authors of the Protocol had not found it necessary to make such emphasis save in the case of Lebanon. Section IV of the Protocol announced:

"The Arab States represented on the [Preparatory] Committee emphasize their respect of the independence and sovereignty of

¹⁰ Hourani, Cecil, *The Arab League in Perspective*, The Arab Office, Washington, D. C., 1947, p. 8.

Lebanon in its present frontiers, which the governments of the above States have already recognized *in consequence* of Lebanon's adoption of an independent policy, which the Government of that country announced in its program of October 7, 1943, unanimously approved by the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies."¹¹

That which the authors of the Protocol had considered a particular situation worthy of special mention, was generalized by the authors of the Pact into a cardinal principle and extended to all member-states.

In these four respects, then, the Pact marks a retrogression from the Protocol. As Cecil Hourani observes:

"It is probable that in spite of its supersession later by the actual Pact of the Arab League, the Alexandria Protocol will continue to play an important role in the movement for Arab unity, and tend to be looked back to and appealed to by Arab nationalists in the future . . .

11 The implicitly conditional nature of this guarantee of respect for "the independence and sovereignty of Lebanon in its present frontiers" was to pass unnoticed neither by the opponents nor by the advocates of the Protocol in Lebanon. The newspaper *al-Amal* (official organ of a Lebanese grouping opposed to Arab unity), in an analysis of the Protocol appearing in its issue of October 16, 1944, purported to detect an alarming precariousness in the guarantee of Lebanon's territorial integrity expressed conditionally in the section of the Protocol cited above. It concluded from the wording of this section that the guarantee as announced was subject to nullification in case a subsequent Lebanese Government came to adopt a policy at variance with that expressed in the program to which the Protocol referred. On the other hand, the Lebanese Premier of the day, an ardent champion of pan-Arabism as well as of the independence of an Arab Lebanon, told Parliament on October 15, 1944 (text in *ad-Diyar*, issue of October 16, 1944), that the phrase "in consequence of," contained in Section IV of the Protocol, was essentially chronological in import, registering the historical fact that the recognition by the Arab Governments of Lebanon's territorial integrity within its present frontiers (i.e., including the districts detached by France from Syria and attached to the district of Lebanon to form Greater Lebanon) had come *after* the adoption by the Lebanese Government of a policy unequivocally asserting the Arab character of that state. He added, however, that that chronological interpretation of the crucial term, "in consequence of," should not detract from another "essential" fact, namely, that the Arab States had thereby acknowledged with joy Lebanon's attainment of inner harmony and its triumph over its former internal bipolarity, as a result of its adoption of an Arabist-independentist policy.

"It recognized that the proposed League was only a first step toward a still closer union which should keep pace with the trend of events in the world in general. It thus did not envisage that the League would cease to evolve, but that it would develop . . . toward unity . . . It envisaged a common orientation of the Arab countries toward the outside world. They were to face in one direction only, and not maintain divergent foreign policies or fall within different spheres of influence . . .

"Between the publication of the Alexandria Protocol and the creation of the Arab League in Cairo in March 1945, governmental and constitutional changes took place in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Transjordan. Partly as a result of these changes, partly as a result of hesitation on the part of some Arab governments, the Pact of the League, although following in general the lines laid down by the Protocol, was in some respects a less strong document, and safeguarded more carefully and more specifically the sovereignty of the member states. Whereas the Protocol had envisaged a progressively increasing surrender of sovereignty, the Pact lays emphasis on its retention."¹²

6

Even as envisaged in the Protocol, however, but more so as created by the Pact, the League was an association, not a union; a locus of relations among political beings, not a political being in itself; a coordinator, or an instrument of coordination, of the actions of members who had retained in their own hands the power to formulate policy and execute actions, not a planner, nor an actor in its own right; a forum for the exchange of views among sovereign states, but not vested with sovereignty nor empowered to wield delegated authority.

The League, in essence, represented two choices between two sets of alternatives; and it owes its afore-mentioned characteristics to the combination of the choices made by Arab officialdom in the process of creating it. Each of these determinant choices represented a compromise between the respective alternatives.

1. In general, the League represented a compromise between

¹² Hourani, *The Arab League*, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

nationalist idealism and political realism; between the paramountcy of the Arab nationalist view recognizing no barriers and no diversity in the Arab World, and the paramountcy of the statehood of existing Arab states. The choice was decisively made in favor of statehood as the point of departure; but at least verbal recognition of the popular doctrine of Arab nationhood and pan-Arabist sentiment was made in the preambles of both the Protocol and the Pact. In the earlier document, it was declared that the meeting of the Preparatory Committee and the agreement it formulated were "in response to Arab public opinion in all Arab countries"; and this declaration was echoed, in almost identical terms, in the words of the Pact: "Responding to the wishes of Arab public opinion in all Arab lands." The popular desire for unification was reconciled with the isolationism which, in diverse shades, colored governmental policy in many Arab lands, through the stratagem of establishing a "league," symbolizing association and enhancing collaboration without destroying sovereignty or transcending separateness.

2. More specifically, the League was a compromise between two impulses, represented by two corresponding forces: one working for territorial extensiveness, and the other seeking functional intensiveness. While not intrinsically irreconcilable, these two desiderata were incapable of simultaneous attainment in the Arab situation of the early and middle 1940's. If it was desirable for the new Arab structure to have the benefit of the participation of all the then-independent Arab States, then, in view of the disinclination of some of them to join in any form of union (whether unitary, federal or confederal), the Arabs had to content themselves with a loose association—sacrificing structural strength and functional effectiveness for the desired pan-Arab comprehensiveness and extensiveness of the proposed structure. On the other hand, those to whom unity as such was the desired goal would have had to sacrifice the Arab-universality of the new structure, in order to attain greater cohesion and real unity on a more limited territorial basis. The Governments of

Iraq and Transjordan, at least, had declared themselves in favor of the unification (in a federal or unitary state) of Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan and Palestine, and the federation of the resultant Greater Syria with Iraq. But, under the Arab circumstances of 1943 and 1944, the Governments of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen were unwilling to participate, even in a loose association, with a Fertile Crescent unit of that nature; nor were the Governments of Lebanon and Syria, each for reasons of its own, ready to participate in the envisaged Fertile Crescent Federation. *The choice, put concretely, was between a loose association among seven Arab states, on the one hand, and a closer union of four, or perhaps only two, Arab states, on the other hand.* Since the two objectives of extensiveness and intensiveness could not, under the circumstances, be attained simultaneously, one had to be selected to the exclusion of the other.

The choice was made in favor of inclusiveness, even though at the expense of cohesiveness. A seven-member Arab League, instead of a two-, three-, or four-member Arab union, came into being.

This choice, however, was supplemented by a verbal concession, representing the second compromise: namely, the declaration, in Article IX (paragraph 1) of the Pact, that the League would not obstruct the efforts of such member-states as might desire to strengthen the ties among themselves. As indicated earlier, such efforts, should they have been forthcoming, would not have entailed the corresponding evolution of the League itself; they would have occurred, perhaps without the non-concurrence or obstruction of other League members, but certainly without bringing about any transformation in the structure of the League itself.

Arab nationalists may have good reason to lament the fact that the Arab political situation in the 1940's was such that comprehensiveness and cohesiveness could not be simultaneously attained, making it imperative that a choice be made between these two equally-cherished values. But, granting the political

climate of that time, Arab nationalists cannot, in retrospect, categorically assert that the choice of comprehensiveness in preference to cohesiveness was a mistake in judgment. If unity as such has its value and appeal to Arab nationalism, so, too, does—or must—the integration of all major sectors of the Arab World within the Arab movement.

Nor can the choice of comprehensiveness made at the time of the founding of the League be cynically attributed to a choice of the “lesser evil” by some Arab statesmen—who have been sometimes portrayed as having been primarily motivated by the desire to prevent, at any cost and by any means, the unification of other Arab states. Such a contention is shown to be unfair by the fact that the Pact, no less than the Protocol, was imbued with the spirit of pan-Arab all-inclusiveness, even though both documents, particularly the Pact, reflected no keen desire for unity. That spirit of all-inclusiveness manifests itself in the Pact in many ways, of which perhaps the most important are the following:

1. The principle of *expandability* was unequivocally declared. This principle is an extension of the principle of all-inclusiveness. Article I of the Pact conferred the unqualified right to join the League upon any Arab country that might gain its independence in the future: “Any independent Arab State has the right to become a member of the League.”¹³ No reservation of any kind was attached.

2. Even before attaining their independence and joining the League, however, other Arab countries were associated with it in a secondary way. They were permitted to participate in the discussions of the Committees entrusted with defining inter-state cooperation in the diverse fields falling within the competence of the League. Article IV of the Pact declared that “representa-

¹³ As soon as they had gained their independence, Libya and the Sudan joined the League, becoming its eighth and ninth members respectively. Libya was admitted to membership in the League on March 22, 1953, having become independent in December 1951. The Sudan, exercising its independence on January 1, 1956, was admitted to membership in the League on January 19, 1956.

tives of the other Arab countries may take part in the work of the aforesaid committees." In a special Annex (No. 2) the authors of the Pact elaborated on the participation of non-independent Arab countries in the work of the Committees in words which merit being quoted in full:

"(2) ANNEX REGARDING COOPERATION WITH COUNTRIES WHICH ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LEAGUE:

"Whereas the member states of the League will have to deal in the Council as well as in the committees with matters which will benefit and affect the Arab world at large;

"And whereas the Council has to take into account the aspirations of the Arab countries which are not members of the Council and has to work toward their realization;

"Now, therefore, it particularly behoves the states signatory to the Pact of the Arab League to enjoin the Council of the League, when considering the admission of those countries to participation in the committees referred to in the Pact, that it should do its utmost to cooperate with them, and furthermore, that it should spare no effort to learn their needs and understand their aspirations and hopes; and that it should work thenceforth for their best interests and the safeguarding of their future with all the political means at its disposal."

3. Palestine, which had a special position in the hearts of the authors of the Pact, as in the hearts of all Arabs, was exempted from the condition required of all other Arab countries (namely, that they should be *de jure* independent before being admitted to membership in the League). A special Annex to the Pact (No. 1) waived the legal requirement of independence with respect to Palestine and declared that the non-attainment of independence "should not be allowed to interfere with her participation in the work of the Council of the League."¹⁴

¹⁴ It will be recalled that a representative of the Arabs of Palestine had been invited to participate, and had in fact participated, in the meetings of the Preparatory Committee and the Sub-Committee in which the texts of the Protocol and the Pact were drafted.

7

The functions and organization of the League were defined in accordance with its ultimate purposes.

According to Article II of the Pact, the League had a three-fold purpose: "To strengthen the relations between the member-States of the League; to coordinate the policies of these States, with a view to the realization of cooperation among them and the safeguarding of their independence and sovereignty; and to consider, in a general way, the affairs and interests of Arab lands."¹⁵

More specifically, the League was to ensure "the close cooperation of its members, in accordance with the systems and circumstances of each State," in the following fields:

"a. Economic and financial affairs, including commercial relations, customs, currency, and questions of agriculture and industry;

"b. Communication, including railroads, roads, aviation, navigation, telegraphs, and posts;

"c. Cultural affairs;

"d. Matters affecting nationality, passports, visas, execution of judgments, and extradition of criminals;

"e. Social affairs; and

"f. Health problems." (Article II of the Pact).

Corresponding to each of these fields of concern, a special Committee was to be set up, composed of representatives from each member-state and from the participating non-independent Arab countries. These Committees were charged with the task of "laying down the principles and defining the extent of cooperation" to be achieved in their respective fields of concern; and with "formulating draft agreements" embodying the said principles. (Article IV).

¹⁵ In order to ensure a more faithful rendition of the original text in English, we have translated these clauses of Article II from the definitive Arabic text. In citing other articles, however, we have used the translation published in the source indicated earlier (Chapter IX, footnote no. 8).

Over-all "supervision of the achievement of the objectives of the League," "examination of the draft agreements formulated by the special committees" prior to submitting them to the member-states for approval and ratification, and "supervision of the implementation of these agreements," were among the tasks entrusted to the supreme body, the Council. The Council was to be composed of representatives of the member-states, each state having a single vote irrespective of the number of its representatives. (Article III). The Council was to convene in ordinary session twice a year, in March and in October, although it was empowered to hold extraordinary sessions upon the request of two or more members whenever the need arose. (Article XI).

In addition to the Council and the special Committees, the League was to have a permanent Secretariat-General, consisting of a Secretary-General with the rank of Ambassador, appointed by the Council; Assistant Secretaries-General, with the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary, appointed by the Secretary-General with the approval of the Council; and other officials. (Article XII).

In the course of time, the organization of the Secretariat-General was regulated by the Council; and diverse departments and special bureaus were set up.¹⁶

8

Under the auspices of the League, a measure of cooperation was realized between the Arab states in the social, economic, cultural, health and other fields.

Twelve treaties, agreements and conventions, furthering the objective of "coordination of policies and measures among member-states," have been concluded: the Cultural Treaty, of

¹⁶ A detailed description of the structure of the League may be found in *The Arab League: Its Origin, Purposes, Structure & Activities* (Arab Information Center, New York, 1955), Chapter II. A chart, portraying graphically the structure of the Arab League, is contained in Boutros-Ghali, B. Y., *The Arab League, 1945-1955* (International Conciliation Series No. 498, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 1954 [sic.]), pp. 416-417.

1945; the Treaty of Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation, of 1950; the Agreement Relating to Writs and Letters of Request, of 1952; the Reciprocal Enforcement of Judgments Agreement, of 1952; the Extradition Agreement, of 1952; the Convention Affecting the Nationality of Arabs Resident in Countries to Which They Are Not Related by Origin, of 1952; the Convention of the Arab Union for Wireless Communications and Telecommunications, of 1953; the Convention of the Privileges and Immunities of the League of Arab States, of 1953; the Convention for Facilitating Trade Exchange and the Regulation of Transit Trade, of 1953; the Convention for the Settlement of Payments of Current Transactions and the Movements of Capital, of 1953; the Nationality Agreement, of 1954; and the Arab Postal Union Convention, of 1955.¹⁷

But treaties do not tell the whole story; nor can the amount of collaboration among the Arab states be adequately measured by treaties alone. An inter-governmental Arab community has been slowly emerging, in which the vital functions of government exercised in each state have been progressively enmeshed in an expanding network of intra-Arab relations. Inter-state institutions and bodies, diverse surveys and studies, and seminars and conferences of experts in many fields have been respectively created, inspired or convened under the auspices of the League.¹⁸

These accomplishments of the Arab states, made possible or at least promoted by the League, must be taken into account in any appraisal of its record or any evaluation of its place and role in the Arab movement.

¹⁷ The dates in this paragraph refer to the respective date of approval of each document by the Council of the League. The texts of these documents may be found in the League of Arab States, Treaty Series, *Agreements and Conventions*, Cairo, 1956.

¹⁸ For an analysis of these activities, see Arab Information Center, *Arab League, op. cit.*, Chapter III; and Ghali, *Arab League, op. cit.*, pp. 433-443. For an analysis of the cultural activities, see League of Arab States, Secretariat-General, Cultural Department, *A General Review of the Cultural Activities of the League of Arab States*, 1946-1956, Cairo, 1957.

Such assessment of the League must also take into account what Edward Atiyah has called the "emotional satisfaction and symbolical value" generated and possessed by the League. Its appearance as "a visible symbol of Arab unity" and as "the fulfillment of a psychological need felt by many Arabs," he considers to be "the first benefit" accruing from the League. Even though "the League might have many weaknesses in practice," he says, the "coming together [of the Arab states] in the League expressed, actually and still more potentially, one of the important facts of political life in the Middle East."¹⁹

When we seek to appraise the actual service rendered by the League to the cause of *Arab unity* (as isolated from the more general cause of the *Arab movement*), we find ourselves confronted by conflicting claims and irreconcilable assertions. Let us examine two antithetical judgments passed by qualified students of the Arab situation:

Speaking on March 22, 1958, on the occasion of the League's Thirteenth Anniversary, Abdul Khalek Hassouna, the Secretary-General of the League, said:

"The fact is that the League has paved the way for the political, military, economic and social unity of the Arabs. The Pact of the League, the Convention of Arab Collective Security, the Arab Cultural Treaty, the many economic and financial agreements which culminated in the conclusion of the Economic Convention between Arab States and in the project of the Arab Development Bank, and the continuous series of Conferences and Seminars which were held during the last thirteen years, all these are the supports on which the foundation of our unity has been built."²⁰

Writing in 1953 from a different perspective, however, Najla Izzeddin stated:

"The League, as it has developed, has dissipated much of the hope that was placed on it. Instead of working towards a greater consoli-

¹⁹ Atiyah, *The Arabs*, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-171.

²⁰ Excerpts from the address may be found in *Arab News and Views* (Published by the Arab Information Center, New York), Vol. IV, No. 6, April 5, 1958.

dation of Arab ties, the League has immobilized the relations between the Arab States at the stage where it found them. It has proved, during these eight years of its existence, to be not the first step leading to a more binding union but an instrument to consecrate the status quo."²¹

In our opinion, while credit must be given to the League for promoting some measure of inter-governmental cooperation, it cannot be asserted that the League has furthered the actual progress towards political unity.

The existence of the League has indeed made possible the progress of the Arab states towards the consolidation of their ties and the strengthening of their relations. Furthermore, the strengthening of inter-governmental ties has sharpened the awareness of Arab officialdom of the interdependence of the Arab states and of the imperative need for greater intra-Arab cohesion. It is this, perhaps, that the Secretary-General of the League had in mind when he said, in the address cited earlier, "We have all become firm believers in unity as the source of our strength." It was also in the same spirit and with the same import, perhaps, that he said, three years earlier, on the occasion of the League's Tenth Anniversary:

"That concept of unity is stronger today and more deeply rooted than at any other epoch. In fact, it has become so deeply engraved on our minds that it has become an article of faith. We not only believe that it is essential, but we also believe that we cannot live without it."²²

But all this points merely to an *indirect* service rendered by the League to the cause of Arab unity. The creation of an increasingly interdependent community of Arab states, and the sharpening of the awareness of Arab officialdom of the need for greater cohesion, do not, in themselves, constitute greater unity. Nor do they necessarily pave the way for political *unity*—unless

²¹ Izzeddin, *Arab World*, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

²² Arab Information Center, *Arab League*, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

the political or psychological barriers to unity are removed, and the tenacious adherence of officialdom to state-sovereignty is shaken loose.

In terms of *direct* contribution to unity, and, more so, in terms of actualization of unity, then, the accomplishments of the League do not entitle it to just praise. For, as Miss Izzeddin observed, the League has tended to "immobilize" and "consecrate" the *status quo* of separate statehood and unyielding sovereignty.

Unlimited state-sovereignty remains, as it was when the League was founded, the touchstone which decisively distinguishes the "League-concept" from the "Arab unity-concept"; and the crucial factor which decrees that, however much the League may contribute to the strengthening of relations between the Arab states, it will remain essentially an association between political units and not a political unit in its own right.



The greatest contribution made by the League to the cause of Arab unity, however, was the bringing-together of all sectors of the Arab World into one pan-Arab fold. Had it not been for the League, each of the major sectors of the Arab World may have pursued a separate path in its development, and not only the *potential political* unity of the Arabs, but their *national* unity also, may have been severely weakened. The timely establishment of the League at the outset of the modern era of Arab independence, and the pan-Arab comprehensiveness of its scope, have helped preserve the national unity of the Arab peoples, and have safeguarded their capacity for political unity.

Even though the League was far from being a vessel for political unity, then, it has nevertheless rendered the service of preventing the establishment of such conditions of political diversification as may have militated against the prospects of Arab unity in the future.

As an expression of unity, the League was faint and feeble. As

an instrument of actual unification, it was powerless. But, as a timely deterrent to possible disintegration, it has played the positive role of "ingathering" the Arab states and protecting their potentialities for political unification from dissipation.

9

The first effort of the idea of Arab unity to enter into and transform Arab life was, if not a complete failure, a very limited success. The League was not an embodiment of unity, but at best an instrument capable of preparing the Arab states for unity.

It was inevitable, therefore, that Arab nationalists should persevere in their efforts to create institutions closer to the idea of Arab unity than was the League.

Two courses were open to them: to transform the League (either through constitutional revision and adaptation of its Charter, or through supplementary measures to be adopted within its matrix); or to create new structures of Arab unity independently of the League.

Both possible courses were tried. The first proved futile. Recourse was then had to the second.

But, before Arab nationalism could successfully make a second attempt, independently of the first, to create a form closer than the League to the idea of Arab unity, two conditions had to obtain:

First: The League had to demonstrate in practice, to officialdom as well as to public opinion, its inability to transform itself into a vessel of authentic unity—by virtue of its intrinsic nature, and in particular by virtue of its proclamation of the principle of state-sovereignty as the cornerstone of its constitution and structure.

Secondly: The effectiveness of the people in each Arab country had to be enhanced, so that public opinion might become a decisive—if not *the* decisive—factor determining the policy of the state; and so that the policy-makers of the state might come

to derive guidance in their basic policy-decisions from the people itself, and inspiration from the interests and general will of the people. For only thus could the centrifugal and disruptive political forces, which had enfeebled the first effort to institute Arab unity, be tamed and subordinated to the earnest desire of the peoples for Arab unity.

It took the Arab World over twelve years to effect the transformations required by these two conditions. It was not until February, 1958—after these conditions had been fulfilled, at least in part—that the second effort of the idea of Arab unity to translate itself into concrete reality attained territorially-limited success.

NEW WINE IN OLD BOTTLES

"No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.

"And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles."

Mark, ii: 21-22

1

IT has been said, with reference to American history, that the manifest failure of the Articles of the Confederation was a blessing in disguise, inasmuch as it dissuaded Americans from trying to evolve and improve those Articles, and urged them to seek instead a new formula for establishing the relations between the American states upon stronger foundations:

"It was probably fortunate that the Articles of the Confederation, which the states adopted near the close of the Revolution, were so clearly defective. Had they offered a somewhat better framework of

government, efforts might have been made to patch them up, and the country might have labored for many decades under a poor constitution. Because they broke down almost completely, they were thrown aside; because the breakdown sprang from their weakness, the new Constitution was made exceptionally strong.”¹

Perhaps future historians may write in the same vein about the Arab situation between 1945, when the League of Arab States was founded, and 1955, when a new approach to Arab unity was initiated, culminating in the unification of some Arab states early in 1958.

2

The founding of the League produced two reactions in the Arab mind. There was mild satisfaction with the mere fact that some inter-governmental Arab arrangement had at last been made. At the same time, there was dissatisfaction with the form which the League had assumed, and with the glaring disparity between the generative intention and the generated reality. There was the hope that the League would evolve into an instrument for stronger bonds and greater cohesion; and there was also the fear lest the League perpetuate the separateness and reciprocal independence of the Arab states—rendering more lasting and durable, by Arab deeds, the fragmentation of the Arab World originally wrought by outside Powers.

If these conflicting feelings towards the League were reconciled, it was only with respect to the future. For most Arabs came to *accept* the new association, hoping that it would prove possible to develop it into a more adequate vessel for Arab unity, and at the same time maintaining their determination to make a new start and build a new edifice if it transpired that the League was inherently incapable of genuine transformation in the desired manner.

The loss of Palestine in 1948/1949, which the League had

¹ Nevins, Allan, and Commager, Henry Steele, *A Short History of the United States*, Modern Library, Random House, New York, 1945, p. 117.

fruitlessly endeavored to avert, brought to the foreground the initial dissatisfaction with that Organization. The League had tried to counteract the gigantic global forces mobilized by the *Zionist Internationale*, and it had failed. The failure of the League to save Palestine from de-arabization was attributed, at least in part, to the conspicuous lack of coordination exhibited by the Arab forces on the military front, and to the corresponding disharmony among the Arab governments on the political and diplomatic front. To the extent to which the League had failed to assert its coordinating influence upon the member-states, it was held responsible for the outcome of the Arab-Zionist struggle in Palestine. Popular dissatisfaction with the League mounted. There were ominous stirrings of discontent with the Arab governments as well as with the League.

It was under the impact of this popular discontent that Arab officialdom made the first move to rectify some of the mistakes committed during the formulation of the Pact of the League, and to supplement the Pact by new inter-governmental arrangements made within the framework of the League. Thus, partly in order to appease the wild discontent of the Arab peoples, and partly in order to grapple with the intrinsic weaknesses of the League which had occasioned that popular reaction, the Arab governments moved rapidly to consolidate the League, to reinforce its structure, and to enhance its cohesiveness, by concluding an agreement which supplemented the provisions of inter-governmental cooperation contained in the Pact.

This agreement, known as the Treaty of Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation, was approved by the Council of the League on April 17, 1950. It purported to integrate the defensive establishments as well as the economies of the Arab states. The Treaty, therefore, went beyond the scope of inter-governmental cooperation envisaged in the Pact. And it tightened the bond between the member-states entailed by adherence to the original Pact: either by restoring certain provisions formerly contained in the Protocol but subsequently discarded in the Pact, or by

introducing new principles which had been contemplated neither by the authors of the Protocol nor by the makers of the Pact.

The Treaty of Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation thus represented an effort to advance, within the framework of the League, into greater integration of the Arab world. It was an effort to evolve the League into an instrument of greater cohesion among the member-states; and it signified a real metamorphosis in the aims, concept and structure of the League.

3

In addition to pledging collective support, by all members, to any member subjected to aggression, and providing for consultation among the members in case of a threat of aggression (in Articles II and III respectively), the Treaty of Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation provided for certain preparatory and permanent measures designed to make effective the fulfillment of these obligations. Accordingly, Article IV stipulated that the contracting states "cooperate in consolidating and coordinating their armed forces" and "participate, each in accordance with its resources and needs, in the preparation of their individual and collective means of defense for the repulsion of armed aggression."²

In order to provide adequate machinery for the projected coordination of the members' armed forces and the furtherance of their defensive capacity, individual and collective, the Treaty established a Joint Defense Council and a Permanent Military Commission, in Articles VI and V respectively. It entrusted to the Council (which was to be composed of the ministers of defense and the ministers of foreign affairs of the contracting states, or their representatives) the task of supervising the execution of the agreements concluded by the contracting states; and it charged the Commission (composed of representatives of the

² All extracts from the Treaty and its Military Annex, quoted in these pages, have been translated by the author from the original Arabic text.

General Staffs of the contracting states) with the technical tasks of "drawing up plans for collective defense," and "preparing the means and methods of the implementation thereof."

A detailed definition of the functions of the Permanent Military Commission was contained in a Military Annex, which was declared to be "an integral part" of the Treaty (Article IX), and which was approved, signed, and ratified at the same time as the Treaty. Section 1 of this Annex charged the Commission with:

"a. The drawing up of military plans for meeting any expected or possible armed aggression;

"b. Submitting proposals relating to the organization of the armed forces of the contracting states, and to the determination of the minimum level thereof, in the light of the military needs and in accordance with the capacity of each state;

"c. Submitting proposals relating to the furtherance of the adequacy of the military establishments of the contracting states, . . . and to the coordination thereof;

"d. Submitting proposals relating to the exploitation of the resources of the contracting states . . . and to the coordination thereof in the interest of the war effort and common defense;

"e. Organizing the exchange of military training missions; and preparing plans for combined practices and maneuvers by the military forces of the contracting states . . . ;

"f. Preparing the necessary data and statistics concerning the resources and military capacities of the contracting states, and the potential contributions of each to the combined war effort; and

"g. Examining the facilities and other forms of assistance which each contracting state may be requested to furnish in wartime to the forces of the other states, operating on its soil in fulfillment of the obligations of this Treaty."

Moreover, Section V of the Military Annex specified the terms in accordance with which the Supreme Command of the combined forces, including Commander-in-Chief and Joint Staff, were to be appointed in time of war.

Parallel to these provisions for collective defense, the Treaty

provided in Articles VII and VIII for the establishment of an Economic Council (to be composed of the ministers of economic affairs of the contracting states, or their representatives), for the purpose of ensuring "cooperation in the development of the states' economies and their natural resources," for "facilitating the exchange of their agricultural and industrial products," and in general for "coordinating their economic activities."

In addition to these military and economic establishments, the Treaty enunciated two principles, which signified progress towards greater cohesion.

In the first place, the contracting states agreed to be bound by the decisions of the Council of Joint Defense—a commitment they had refused to make five years earlier with reference to the Council of the League. Article VI of the Treaty affirmed that:

"Decisions adopted by a two-thirds majority of the Council shall be binding upon all the contracting states."

In the second place, the prohibition of non-divergence in foreign policy, which had been enunciated in the Protocol but subsequently omitted from the text of the Pact, was resurrected and reinstalled in the Treaty. Article X stated:

"The contracting states undertake to conclude no international agreement which may be inconsistent with the present Treaty.

"They further undertake, in their international relations with other states, to pursue no course which may be incompatible with the purposes of the present Treaty."

4

The Treaty of Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation was an auspicious beginning of progress towards a more effective system of inter-governmental cooperation between the Arab states.

Approved by the Council of the League on April 17, 1950, the Treaty came into force on August 23, 1952.

Had it been faithfully implemented; had its potentialities

been fully actualized; had its logic been given free play to apply itself more extensively; and had its spirit been permitted to permeate and transform existing inter-governmental arrangements, the Treaty, in all probability, would have carried the League a considerable distance towards becoming a satisfactory, albeit preliminary, tool for unifying the Arab World.

But the promise contained in the Treaty was not to be fulfilled. Nothing tangible came out of the Treaty. Inertia and dissension, marking the performance of Arab officialdom of the day, stifled the initial promise contained in that long-overdue corrective measure.

From the outset, in fact, it was manifest that the contracting states were not equally eager to enter into the new, reinforced association. While five members signed the Treaty simultaneously two months after it was approved by the Council of the League, the two remaining members, Iraq and Jordan, did not affix their signatures until February 2, 1951, and February 16, 1952, respectively. The dates of formal ratification ranged between October 31, 1951, and October 11, 1953, with two countries making a qualified ratification. Yemen made "reservations" and Iraq made a "declaration" qualifying their respective ratifications.

In addition to showing initial hesitation to participate in the Treaty of Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation, some of the contracting states continued in subsequent years to hinder the implementation of the Treaty.

Inter-governmental frictions and jealousies soon increased. They came to be consolidated in more or less permanent affinities and corresponding animosities. Formerly fluid trends tended to become rigid patterns. A microcosmic "balance of power," with its inevitable stratagem of "alliances," came into play within the Arab community. An Iraqi-Jordanian "axis" emerged—reviving once more the old concept of Arab unity which was implicit in the Arab Revolt of 1916, was activated in the aftermath of the First World War, and was reincarnated in the early 1940's in the

cognate schemes of "Fertile Crescent" unity and "Greater Syria" unity under Hashemite suzerainty and with British support. A counteracting Egyptian-Saudi "axis" found its way to the forefront of intra-Arab politics. While Yemen and Lebanon endeavored to remain aloof, Syria appeared to be shuttling back and forth between the two "camps."

One is reminded of the experience of the American states during the regime of the Articles of the Confederation. Both in their symptoms, and, more significantly, in their causes, the two situations bear close comparison. As American historians have observed:

"The 'league of friendship' seemed to be turning into a league of dissension. Their Congress was sinking into utter contempt. The quarrels among the states were growing positively dangerous."³

Substitute the names of the Arab institutions for the American institutions, and this description of the American scene in the 1780's will accurately portray the Arab situation in the early 1950's.

* * *

It is true that lip-service to Arab solidarity continued to be paid by Arab officialdom, even in the midst of the grave inter-governmental dissensions of the early 1950's. It is also true that cooperation between the Arab governments continued to take place on the non-controversial, non-political planes of Arab life. Even the two councils created by the Treaty of Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation—namely, the Council of Joint Defense and the Economic Council—continued to hold perfunctory meetings. But no tangible results were destined to emerge. And the ineffectiveness of the Treaty, under the circumstances surrounding the attempted enforcement of its provisions, was widely recognized by the public.

³ Nevins and Commager, *Short History*, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

It was not, however, until early 1955, when Iraq took part in founding the Baghdad Pact—heedless of the crucial provisions of Article X of the Treaty—that this Treaty, the inertness of which had been widely surmised before then, began to be openly dismissed as a worthless piece of parchment.

Until then, many Arabs had been hoping against hope that the Treaty might eventually work, and that inter-governmental Arab solidarity might somehow be realized. In fact, some Arab leaders, apparently oblivious to the handwriting on the wall, were hopefully putting before the League certain proposals calculated to go beyond the Treaty in their import, even while the Treaty itself, as a modest step towards greater cohesion, was demonstrating its patent inapplicability under the circumstances of the day.

Thus, Dr. Nazim al-Qudsi, then-Premier of Syria, proposed to the Political Committee of the League on January 24, 1951, that the League endorse and labor for the immediate *unification* of foreign policy and defense forces of the Arab states within a framework of *political unity*—unitary, federal, or confederal.

Similarly, Dr. Fadil al-Jamali, then-Premier of Iraq, requested the Council of the League, on January 11, 1954, to give its blessing to the initiation of negotiations between such Arab states as were then favorably disposed towards union, in order that they might go ahead and unite without awaiting the development of similar readiness among the other states.

That such proposals were foredoomed to failure must have been obvious to their respective proponents. Nevertheless, the mere fact that they were made at that time shows the extent to which Arabs were willing to go in order to accomplish unity within the framework of the League, by transforming this institution through internal evolution into an instrument of unity.

* * *

It was only when all conceivable efforts had been made to transform the League from within into an organization more

symbolical of and more conducive to genuine unity, and when all such efforts had failed, that the Arab mind, both in official quarters and in the general public, learned the ancient wisdom that new wine must not be poured into old bottles. It was only then that many Arabs, who, until that time, had been content with evolutionary progress towards unification, began in their desperation to seek other means and to explore other avenues of approach.

As soon as the Joint Defense Treaty had been torn up in the early months of 1955, the process of erecting new structures, aiming at authentic unity, was set in motion. The new approach began to be adopted in the latter part of 1955. Gradually and piecemeal, the new edifice was built. On February 1, 1958, the first wing was completed.

In the meantime, however, a new factor had descended upon the Arab scene. Tempest-like, a "Great Debate"—stirring the emotion and reaching to the depths of the Arab heart—had created a new Arab situation. This debate was destined to affect significantly the second approach to Arab unity.

Before we proceed to tell the story of the second attempt to create Arab unity, therefore, we must pause to examine this new phenomenon: the "Great Debate."

THE "GREAT DEBATE"

1

THE appearance of the "Great Debate" on the Arab scene marks the advent of a new epoch in the history of the Arab national movement. It signifies a basic transformation in the objectives of that movement, and a metamorphosis in its outlook on those objectives.

Broadly speaking, the history of the Arab national movement may be divided into three main periods. The first was the period of *awakening*; and it lasted from the early beginnings of the modern Arab revival in the Nineteenth Century until the eve of the First World War. The second, the period of *struggle*, stretched from the outbreak of the First World War until the end of the Second. The period of *fulfillment*, which is still continuing, opened after the end of the Second World War.¹

* * *

¹ History does not submit to neat division into clear-cut periods. Nevertheless, the evolution of the Arab national movement shows that, at different stages, the movement was marked by different general tendencies. It is these stages that we have here described as distinct "periods." It must be borne in mind, however, that neither the chronological demarcations cited above, nor the qualitative characterizations of the various periods, are precise markings; nor do they apply uniformly to all Arab countries.

The first period was ushered in when Arab society, after a long slumber under the Ottomans, began to stir into life in the Nineteenth Century. At that early stage, the revival of each sector of the Arab World was more or less isolated from the revival of other sectors. On the whole, the emphasis was on cultural and spiritual rebirth, as in the Fertile Crescent and in the Peninsula respectively, or on socio-political modernization, as in Egypt.

During the second period, the revival movements of the various Arab regions converged upon one another. They were imperceptibly transformed into an Arab national movement—in which the range of vision became pan-Arab, not provincial; nationalism became the dominant concept; and the political objectives of liberation and unification sprang to the foreground. Being primarily a period of struggle and insurrection, it manifested the features which usually accompany strife: preoccupation with the adversary, negativism, and concentration on short-range objectives. Hence the politicism, anti-Europeanism, and fanaticism of the Arab national movement of the inter-War decades.

The third period was ushered in by the attainment of the political objectives of the second. As one Arab country after another gained independence, or at least a measure of self-government, its leaders and citizenry began to assume some of the responsibilities theretofore concentrated in the hands of the dominating foreign Power. The administration of the country, the development of its resources, the organization of its schools, the codification and enforcement of its laws, the shaping of its socio-economic systems—all these and many other functions of self-government, having passed into the hands of the people, furnished most Arab peoples with the first opportunity they had had for several centuries to concern themselves actively and responsibly with the vital functions of government. The *challenge* of responsibility went hand in hand with the *occasion* for responsibility.

Thus, the new stage of the Arab national movement began to take shape as a period in which primary emphasis was laid on the

tasks required by the actual exercise of newly-won independence. The generation whose total outlook had been formed during the years of struggle for political emancipation was being called upon, in the new situation, to revise its former convictions and reappraise its scale of values. *Self-government*, formerly looked upon as the supreme goal and the cure-all for the diverse maladies of Arab society, had to incorporate within itself the concept of *good government* in order to fulfill its promise and retain its appeal. The *anti-foreigner*, *anti-European*, or *anti-colonial* accents of the earlier stage were counterbalanced by an affirmative emphasis on domestic tasks, and on compulsions of a positive character. While they did not lose their popular appeal, political slogans of *independence* and *unity* were supplemented by supra-political concepts of economic development, social betterment, cultural rebirth, and a more abundant life. A new image of freedom was unveiled. In the period of wrestling with foreign powers for national liberty, the Arab mind had been dominated by an instrumental and derivative concept of freedom, consonant with the preoccupation of the times: "freedom *from* others" had been deemed coextensive with freedom as such. Emancipation achieved, however, the plenitude of freedom formerly concealed or relegated to the background was restored to its rightful place of eminence within the total, authentic concept of freedom: "freedom *for* achievement" was able to reveal its abundant implications and its exciting challenge.

The Arab national movement thus outgrew its former one-sidedness. It came into its own. The long *process of awakening* culminated in a state of *awakeness*. Arab nationalism burst out of the *political* plane, to which it had been confined during the second period, onto the *spiritual-cultural* plane on which it had initially grown in the first period. From a *two-dimensional* image of national struggle and fulfillment, with *independence* and *unity* as its twin objectives, the Arab mind passed into a more mature, *three-dimensional* concept—adding the dimension of

depth to the Arab field of vision, as it were, and introducing *human betterment* to the range of Arab national aspiration.²

2

If struggle has its logic, so, too, does attainment.

The widened, enriched concept of nationalism, arising in the Arab mind after the achievement of independence and simultaneously with the immersion of the Arabs in the constructive tasks and responsibilities of self-government, was destined subsequently to experience the bewilderment which often follows attainment.

Before it became free to chart the course of its national life, each Arab people (and the Arab national movement as a whole) was too engrossed in the immediate struggle to indulge in leisurely and then-academic speculation concerning the form in which the pursued objectives would be realized or the manner in which the sought-after capacities would be exercised. Such speculation was largely confined to academic circles, intellectual groups, and ideologically-conscious political parties; the majority of Arabs did not evince active concern or interest in it. Furthermore, the divergence in views among those who did participate in such speculation was, on the whole, subordinated to their general agreement on the identity of their national objectives—since that divergence, by the nature of the case, bore no immediate, practical relevance to the conditions of the day. Accordingly, there was general agreement, bordering on unanimity, with respect to the objectives of the Arab national movement. That "independence," "unity," and "improvement of social conditions" were national objectives worthy of pursuit and struggle was accepted by everybody; what these objectives signified was also generally, if somewhat vaguely, known.

But attainment brought diversification in its wake. *Independence* entailed the charting of a foreign policy and the adoption

² For a brief analysis of this transition, see the author's article, "The Arab World Awakens," in *The American Mercury*, January, 1956.

of diverse decisions pertaining to relations with the outside world; and several concepts of foreign policy, not always compatible with one another, commended themselves. Furthermore, *unification*, as we saw in earlier chapters,³ aroused a divergence of views on territorial scope, form, degree of cohesion, and timing. Finally the *improvement of social conditions*, once it became a task calling for achievement, raised countless questions concerning socio-economic systems, methods of change, comparative roles of public and private agencies, pace and scope of change, and other related elements of improvement.

The unanimity of the period of struggle, then, vanished when the Arab mind responded to the challenge of attainment, and faced the imperative tasks of defining its purposes in specific terms with a view to concrete realization, or of exercising its newly-attained capacities.



The crucial question with which the Arab mind came to occupy itself was the question of change. Under the compulsion of events, and in response to the demands made by the fluidity of the Arab situation in that era of transition, many changes were taking place in Arab life; and the subject of change—particularly its pace, range, and degree—became the dominant theme of Arab thought.

With respect to each of the three cardinal objectives of the national movement, the main question was: What changes should be introduced? Where should alteration halt?

Many forces—unleashed at the outset of the Arab awakening in the Nineteenth Century, or subsequently aroused by diverse stimuli—had reached their consummation in the mid-Twentieth Century; and they all demanded that basic transformation be made in the social, economic and political structures of traditional Arab society.

³ See Chapters VIII and IX.

The transfer of authority from outside Powers to the Arab peoples had elevated the stature of the indigenous *intellectual and professional groups*, inasmuch as they alone possessed the technical qualifications and the competence requisite for performing the functions of government theretofore commonly discharged by foreign officials. The evacuation of foreign troops had similarly enhanced the position of the fledgling *national armies*, which had become the mainstay of power and the guardian of sovereign authority in their respective states. The *masses*—whose support of the struggle for liberation had spelled the difference between sustained struggle unto victory or sporadic, isolated skirmishes doomed to defeat—had established themselves as a force which could no longer be ignored. The stirrings in the ranks of formerly underprivileged groups—including the *peasantry, labor and women*—who had borne the main burden of national resistance to foreign rule, were an effective reminder that the interests of these groups, and their rights to basic equality and human dignity, must be recognized. Above all, a *new generation* had arisen. This younger generation of Arabs had been schooled, in its formative years, in defiance of imposed authority. It had acquired in the process a zestful rebelliousness against the sway of traditions, entertaining little respect for imposed authority of any kind or from any source. It was a generation unwilling to submit blindly to power. Ever ready to challenge unreasonable forms of privilege, it insisted that authority always vindicate itself before demanding compliance. Vigorous in its affirmations as well as in its rejections, this new generation possessed the simple idealism of youth: it was impatient with the disparity between the real and the ideal worlds, unable or unwilling to concede that injustice, basic inequality, or the coexistence of bounty and privation, were inescapable in an imperfect world. Nurtured in the idealism and self-denial of struggle, and free of vested interests of its own, this younger generation of Arabs was determined to infuse its ideals into Arab society.

The clamor of all these groups for a healthier society was loud

and insistent. The appetite for change was insatiable. From all sides came the call for total transformation of the principles and structures of social organization in the Arab World.

* * *

While all these forces predisposed the Arab mind to seek drastic change and total transformation, other developments occurred which gave added impetus to the propensities for the reform and refashioning of Arab society already existing in the ranks of the intellectuals, young army officers, women's organizations, labor groupings, and the younger generation in general.

In the first place, the failure of independence to satisfy the deeper yearnings for a better life stimulated in the Arab mind an "agonizing reappraisal" of values theretofore held sacred and convictions formerly entrenched. The not-too-patient young Arabs, who had envisaged self-mastery as the miraculous cure for all Arab maladies, and had indeed come to identify self-government with good government, found that their newly-won independence had failed to fulfill the promise which they had believed was inherent in it. The good society which they had anticipated, and for the creation of which they had labored and sacrificed, had failed to descend upon the Arab World overnight after the attainment of independence.

The leadership of the infant states had passed to the same groups who had led their peoples during the preceding period of struggle and insurrection; and it soon became evident that leadership in a war of liberation was not necessarily a mark of qualification for leadership in the struggle for reconstruction and reform. Furthermore, the struggle against foreign domination had been led by groups and individuals whose eminence had derived from their family position, economic status, or social prominence during the inter-War decades. The socio-economic institutions whence the eminence of those groups or individuals had derived became, after independence, the primary cause of

discontent. Their representatives were naturally reluctant to take the lead in reforms whose outcome was certain to be the liquidation of those very institutions to which they owed their eminence.

If the good society had not been created immediately after the attainment of independence—the young Arabs argued—it was because the leaders of Arab society represented the institutions which were the main barrier to a better life. The removal of foreign domination, therefore, was not enough; it had to be followed by the emancipation of Arab society from the tyranny of domestic forces perpetuating backwardness and hindering progress.

In the second place, World War II and its repercussions enhanced the Arab desire for reform and change. Increasing contacts with the more advanced world spurred the Arabs to establish new institutions on the foundations of social justice, equality, individual freedom, efficiency of government, and democracy. The awakening of the formerly-colonial, underdeveloped world of Asia and Africa in the post-War years had a similar effect on Arab society. In the world at large, new forces had been unleashed; and the impact of these forces on the societies within which they operated, whether in the more advanced countries of Europe or in the underdeveloped countries of Asia and Africa, was felt in Arab society.

In the third place, the loss of Palestine in 1948/1949 convinced Arabs of all walks of life that independence was not enough, that drastic social change and basic reform were imperative, that greater unification of the Arab World than had been accomplished through the League of Arab States was indispensable for the survival of the Arabs, and that young and competent leadership was the greatest need of the moment.

Millions of Arabs lived and moved and had their being, in those dark months of 1948 and 1949, under the shadow of the tragic loss of Palestine. In their conversations, Arabs asked but one question: Why did we lose Palestine?

The temptation could have been strong indeed to find easy

refuge in easy answers. The younger generation of Arabs could easily have satisfied itself by placing the entire blame for the loss of Palestine on the shoulders of others. Arabs could have argued: "We lost Palestine because we were unable to purchase arms on both sides of the Iron Curtain, as the adversary did. We lost Palestine because the United Nations, prodded by Powers from the West and Powers from the East, intervened at every critical turn to impose a military truce beneficial to the enemy and detrimental to our forces. We lost Palestine because we lacked lobbyists in every capital, and in the councils of the nations, pleading our case and counteracting the unprecedentedly fierce lobbying of the *Zionist Internationale* on a world-wide scale. We lost Palestine because we lacked the propaganda machine which the Zionists successfully employed to mobilize world opinion to support their cause financially, politically, and diplomatically . . ."

But young Arabs found little satisfaction in such reasoning, however justified it was. Theirs was not an attempt to *excuse* themselves, but an earnest endeavor to *learn* from the tragic loss of Palestine edifying lessons for the future, however harsh these lessons might be.

The literature of the late 1940's and early 1950's abounds in books, pamphlets, and articles arguing in countless ways but articulating the same pronouncement: "We lost Palestine because Arab society was sick and defective." The prescriptions which various Arab thinkers suggested may have differed widely from one another; but the diagnosis they made was essentially the same: "We failed in our first test as independent states because our society was backward and our creative energy was paralyzed by the diseases of our social life."

That period of candid and undaunted self-confrontation proved to be one of the most pregnant moments in modern Arab history. To millions of Arabs, the loss of Palestine was the indictment of a whole generation. The import of that harsh verdict of history, as envisioned by the Arabs of the day, went beyond

Palestine, beyond military power or impotence: it was a judgment on values cherished for thirty years, on premises of thought considered axiomatic since the end of the First World War, on age-old traditions and systems of social organization; in short, on an entire mode of existence.

The dark crisis of Palestine, coming in the wake of the historical developments cited earlier, lent urgency and imperative-ness to the desire already expressed for drastic change and far-reaching transformation in Arab life.

3

Whenever the desire for change and reform obtains, it stimulates and activates the latent forces of continuity and of maintenance of the *status quo* against which the revolt is launched. Their vested interests threatened, their cherished values endangered, and their leadership challenged, these forces and groups rise to defend the mode of life they typify. So it was with Arab society in the late 1940's and early 1950's.

The challenge to existing institutions and forms of social-economic-political organization stimulated into active self-defense all those Arab groups and forces which were endangered in their interests or traditional outlooks by the mounting forces of reform.

The call for change, therefore, became a dialogue between the champions of a *new order* and the advocates of the *status quo*. Out of this dialogue grew the "Great Debate" of the 1950's.

Essentially, this was a debate between the clamor for a radical departure from existing norms and patterns, and the insistence that these norms and patterns be maintained and preserved. It was a debate between those who championed *fundamental* and *comprehensive* change in, and those who advocated the *maintenance* of, the *status quo*. It was a debate between *dynamic* and *static* views of national self-fulfillment.

In the course of time, this debate extended to, and involved, all the cardinal objectives of the Arab national movement:

namely, the improvement of social conditions, unity, and independence. The debate also involved the three dimensions of Arab life which corresponded to the three objectives of the Arab national movement: namely, domestic social-economic-political organization within each Arab country; relations among Arab countries; and relations between the Arab countries and the outside world. No objective of the national movement, and no dimension of Arab life, escaped the impact of the controversy between the rebels against, and the defenders of, the *status quo*.⁴

* * *

On the *domestic* plane, the exponents of dynamic nationalism called for drastic alterations in the structure of Arab society. Theirs was a revolt against the quasi-feudal system of land tenure and the economic, social, and political stratification of Arab society on the basis of that system. The subdued position of women in Arab life was also a target of the forces of reform. Above all, monarchy as a form of government was viewed as the supreme symbol, as well as the mainstay, of the resistance of Arab society to socio-political progress; and as the bulwark of the quasi-feudal system. An alliance was detected by dynamic nationalists between monarchy and feudalism; and that alliance was looked upon as the chief source of opposition to the introduction of social justice, liberty, and equality of opportunity into Arab life. Accordingly, dynamic nationalists rallied to the call for reform, convinced that—unless feudalism was liquidated; and unless monarchy was either effectively curbed by adequate constitutional limitations, or completely supplanted by republican institutions of government—the development of Arab human and natural resources would remain purely quantitative and would fail to introduce fundamental qualitative improve-

⁴ For an analysis of the debate between the "dynamic" and the "static" brands of Arab nationalism, see the author's "Arab Nationalism—The Latest Phase" in *Middle East Forum* (Beirut, Lebanon), November, 1957.

ments. Dynamic nationalists were also convinced that, even from the standpoint of sheer quantity, such development would remain severely restricted in its ultimate scope as a result of the continued existence of the quasi-feudal system, the continued sway of the corrupt, predatory, inefficient and incompetent *ancien régime* over government, and the continued concentration of sovereign power in the hands of kings, despite neat formulae of nominal constitutional limitations.

Similarly, on the plane of *intra-Arab relations*, dynamic nationalism championed the surrender of sovereignty by the individual Arab states and the fusion of separate states into a pan-Arab union. It had been already made manifest, by the Arab experience with the League of Arab States, that inter-governmental cooperation consistently crashed upon the rocks of state-sovereignty, and that a mere coordinating agency was by nature incapable of taming and transcending the obstinate, disruptive impact of the retention of full sovereignty by the constituent states.

Finally, on the plane of *foreign relations*, the exponents of dynamic nationalism called for extricating the Arab World from the intricate network of ties with which it had been forced to handcuff itself. They maintained that, to permit the perpetuation and extension—albeit in a new guise—of such relations as had theretofore ensured for foreign Powers undue influence over Arab fortunes was incompatible with Arab sovereignty and detrimental to the prospects of exercising their newly-won independence by the Arab states. They further proclaimed that the Arab states were free to initiate relations with any outside Power, in pursuit of Arab national interests and within the framework of Arab sovereignty. To shrink from exercising free and creative statesmanship—in the direction of self-extrication from then-existing ties with one group of Powers, and the initiation of relations with all Powers on a basis of equality in rights and responsibilities—was tantamount to acquiescing in the permanent domination of one group of foreign Powers over Arab destiny. Noting

that the new international setting of the post-World War II era had become fiercely competitive, and recalling that the Arab countries had embarked on their new career as sovereign states at the same time in which the character of global international relations had been thus transformed, dynamic nationalists called for an Arab foreign policy of "non-alignment" and "positive neutralism" corresponding to the new Arab status in the world and to the new character of international relations.⁵

* * *

The controversy between the "dynamic" and the "static" brands of Arab nationalism, which involved all the cardinal objectives of the Arab national movement and all the corresponding dimensions of Arab national life, revolved essentially around the question of change. It was in terms of their advocacy of, or their opposition to, *fundamental* change in *all* spheres of Arab life that Arab nationalists were divided into, and identified as, "dynamic" or "static" nationalists.

Static nationalists, content with the formal attainment of the goals of Arab nationalism, purported to see no need for qualitative change in the basic forms and structures of Arab life. They were satisfied with normal evolution and development within the framework of those structures. Dynamic nationalists, on the other hand, asserted that the attainment of independence was but the occasion and the starting-point for a daring process of reorientation, reorganization, and reform. They contended that the achievement of independence was the beginning of a new era of national struggle for self-fulfillment, not the terminus of national struggle. They proclaimed that the exercise of independence entailed, by necessity, progress towards authentic unity, the introduction of fundamental reform into the institu-

⁵ For an analysis of Arab neutralism, see the author's article, "Arab Nationalism Today," in *Current History*, November, 1957.

tions of Arab social organization and government, and the adoption of a new attitude towards the outside world.

* * *

Much confusion has been caused by the outlook of many observers and analysts of Arab affairs on this Great Debate. Some analysts have mistakenly isolated the various precepts of the "dynamic" or "static" brands of Arab nationalism from one another, and have viewed each of these organic schools of thought solely from the perspective of one of their respective postulates in detachment from the total context thereof. Others have applied to these opposed Arab points of view criteria and labels evolved in and derived from Western socio-political situations.

Thus, some observers have termed the "dynamic" and "static" brands of Arab nationalism variably as "liberal" vs. "conservative," "progressive" vs. "reactionary," "revolutionary" vs. "evolutionary," "extremist" or "radical" vs. "moderate." The specific connotations, acquired by each of these antithetical terms through their genesis within the traditions and historical experiences of Western society, render the application of these labels to the Arab situation confusing and indeed misleading.

In the past two or three years, a more confusing and misleading practice has been followed. Many observers—interested primarily in the concepts of *foreign policy* implicit in the controversy between the "dynamic" and "static" types of Arab nationalism, to the exclusion of the concepts of *domestic policy* or *unity* which are equally implicit in that controversy—have tended to characterize the total position of each point of view exclusively in terms of its respective foreign-policy orientation. Hence the designation of the Great Debate as one between "pro-Western" and "neutralist" Arab forces. (This over-simplification has been rendered more misleading by virtue of the apparent inability or unwillingness of some observers to com-

prehend the basic and essential difference between "neutralism" and "pro-Soviet" tendencies.) Other students of Arab affairs—focusing their attention on the economic status (particularly the oil-producing status) of the Arab countries whose respective governments champion either the "dynamic" or the "static" form of nationalism—have characterized the two points of view primarily in terms of that status, and have accordingly spoken of the Arab Great Debate as a controversy between the "have's" and the "have-not's." Finally, other analysts of the Arab situation, concerned primarily with the forms of government of the respective regimes involved in the Great Debate, have viewed this debate as one between "monarchists" and "republicans." Each of these pairs of designations is correct and relevant as far as it goes; but none is adequate—because none goes far enough. For all of these designations single out one facet of the debate, detach it from interrelated facets, and characterize the total position of each point of view exclusively in terms of that selected facet.

4

In the beginning, the lines between the two camps engaged in the "Great Debate" were clearly marked. The debate raged in all Arab countries, cutting across political boundaries. Broadly speaking, intellectual groups, political and ideological parties, young army officers, and the literate and vocal sectors of the masses in all Arab countries voiced their common desire for basic change: officialdom, on the other hand, invariably manifested its dedication to the preservation of the *status quo*. The gap between the purposes of the official crust and the aspirations of the bulk of the people had never been so wide in modern Arab history.

But the dynamism of the movement would not permit the situation to remain at a standstill. The discontent of the peoples came to be expressed in murmurs of increasing ominousness; and, eventually, the stirrings of the peoples succeeded in translat-

ing themselves into decisive action whenever the situation was ripe and wherever the capacity obtained.

Governments were overthrown, first in Syria in 1949, and then in Egypt in 1952; and new regimes, responsive to the popular demand for dynamic change in all aspects of national life, came to power. Less drastic and less abiding modifications in the structure of society and in the orientation of governments were made in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and elsewhere in the Arab World, after mid-1952.

The revolutions of Syria and Egypt, and the partial changes in constitutions, policies and government-personnel elsewhere in the Arab World, soon altered the nature of the struggle between the "dynamic" and the "static" varieties of Arab nationalism. It was no longer a case of restive peoples desperately wrestling with a complacent officialdom. For new governments had come into being in some Arab countries; and these new regimes were animated by the desire for change which swayed the peoples in all Arab countries. These new regimes, by virtue of the fact that they had suddenly come to power and had immediately embarked on revolutionizing Arab life, furnished inspiration and imparted hope to the peoples throughout the Arab World. The cause of dynamic nationalism, theretofore espoused by discontented and idealistic popular groups, had come after 1952 to be championed, put into practice, and symbolized by new governments. The equation had been changed with the sudden change of factors and coefficients.

The transformed status of dynamic nationalism, resulting from its elevation to the rank of official policy in some Arab countries, altered the character of the duel between the forces of dynamic and static nationalism by heralding two new interrelated phenomena:

In the first place, the new, robust, dynamic regimes came to exercise great inspirational influence over, and to stimulate hearty responsiveness among, the Arab peoples throughout the Arab World, across political boundaries. A new symbolism and

a new pattern of leadership arose. Dynamic leaders in one Arab country became the heroes of the peoples in other Arab countries no less than in their own. The name of Gamal Abdul Nasser, as the supreme embodiment of Arab dynamic nationalism in power, became the symbol of hope and aspiration among dynamic Arab nationalists everywhere; his image was displayed as widely as his leadership was recognized or his accomplishments were hailed throughout the Arab World. A pan-Arabism of sentiment and symbol, as well as of leadership, became a concrete popular reality even though state-barriers and state-sovereignty persisted on the governmental level. New hopes were aroused. Even where the prospects of accomplishing in a given Arab country the revolutionary changes wrought by Nasser in Egypt were dim and remote, the aspiration for such accomplishment was revived and invigorated. By virtue of the identity of their objectives and their dual belief in the imperativeness of Arab political unity and in the actuality of Arab national unity, dynamic Arab nationalists in all Arab countries perceived for the first time a concrete oneness of aspiration and leadership despite the persisting separateness of their states and the active opposition of their governments.

In the second place, new forms of Arab inter-governmental dissensions and affinities emerged, overshadowing and to some extent superseding the dissensions and affinities of former years. In the immediate past, inter-governmental frictions had been generated by discordant interests or overlapping ambitions of the same basic nature. After 1952, however, inter-governmental dissensions came to be generated more by differences in type, philosophy and orientation of government, than by the discordant interests of governments of the same form or outlook. For, under the impact of the new challenge hurled at the *ancien régime* and the static officialdom, by the Arab peoples as a whole as well as by the new dynamic regimes, old animosities between Arab dynasties tended to be forgotten. Faced by the identical challenge levelled at them in common, governments which clung

to the *status quo* found themselves compelled to espouse a common cause. As old frictions, jealousies and fears among them thus tended to be overshadowed and forgotten, new affinities among them began to take shape. New inter-governmental affiliations came into being.

Thus, as a result of the revolutionary changes in governmental structures and orientations in Syria and Egypt, between 1949 and 1952, the former polarization, representing Arab peoples eager for change, on the one hand, and Arab officialdom, divided against itself but equally dedicated to the preservation of the *status quo*, on the other hand, gave way to a new polarization in the Arab World. The new polarization represented dynamic peoples throughout the Arab World, and dynamic regimes in some Arab countries, on the one hand, and static governments in the remaining Arab countries, drawing closer to one another despite their former dissensions and animosities in the face of the challenge hurled at them in common, on the other hand.



It was within this transformed situation, created by the advent of the "Great Debate," that the growing discontent with the limited measure of Arab "unity" accomplished within the framework of the League of Arab States—dramatized and climaxed by the collapse of the Arab system of collective defense and the virtual nullification of the Treaty of Joint Defense in the early months of 1955⁶—finally exerted compelling influence and caused the march towards political unification to begin in earnest later in that year.

It was therefore within the new Arab situation, under the influence of the new forces, and through the new inter-governmental affinities and affiliations, that the second Arab attempt to create Arab unity was made.

⁶ See Chapter X.

A FRESH START

1

As soon as it became evident that progress towards a greater measure of cohesion than had been provided for in the Pact of the League of Arab States was unattainable within the framework of the League itself, Arabs began to think seriously in terms of establishing relations of greater cohesiveness between such individual states as were willing to conclude them outside the framework of the League.

Of decisive importance was the failure of the Treaty of Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation, which had been approved by the Council of the League on April 17, 1950. This Treaty remained *inert* even after it was finally ratified by all members of the League and after it formally entered into effect in 1952. It continued to be *technically* in force, and *potentially* capable of implementation, however, until 1955—when it was virtually nullified as a result of the founding of the Bagdad Pact upon the initiative of the Government of Iraq on February 24, 1955. By concluding an agreement with states which were not members

of the League, and by acting without consultation with, and without the consent of, other Arab states, Iraq furnished these states with the justification for judging the Baghdad Pact as a violation of Article X of the Treaty of Joint Defense.

Those Arab states which were convinced, on the one hand, of the need for an Arab system of collective security such as had been contemplated in the Treaty, and which, on the other hand, were opposed to the Baghdad Pact, then became ready to proceed towards establishing a system of collective security among themselves, through bilateral or multilateral agreements to that effect concluded outside the framework of the League.

It was natural that the initiative for such moves be taken by Egypt and Syria. For the governments of these two countries were in agreement with one another on the desirability of a system of joint defense between the Arab states, and on their appraisal of the unattainability of such a system within the League. More significant was the fact that these two governments, animated by the "dynamic" brand of Arab nationalism, were tied together in bonds of mutual sympathy and special affinity, resulting from the similarity of their aims in foreign policy and in domestic socio-political organization, and from their ardent desire for unity.

2

Within less than eight months from the signing of the Baghdad Pact and the resultant collapse of the Arab system of collective defense, a Mutual Defense Pact was concluded between Syria and Egypt, destined to be the precursor of many successive agreements between these two Arab countries, and the first of cumulative strata in the edifice of Egyptian-Syrian unity.

The Egyptian-Syrian Mutual Defense Pact¹ of October 20, 1955, contained all the salient features which had marked the Treaty of Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation, with the

¹ An unofficial translation of the full text of this Pact may be found in the *Middle East Journal*, Winter of 1956, Vol. X, No. 1, pp. 77-79.

exception of its economic sections. In fact, the Egyptian-Syrian Pact was a reactivation, within the limited context of Syrian-Egyptian partnership, of the moribund pan-Arab Joint Defense Treaty. The parallelism between the texts as well as the purposes of the two documents emphatically suggests that the later agreement between Syria and Egypt was designed essentially to fill the gap in inter-governmental relations left wide open by the failure of the Joint Defense Treaty.

In addition to providing for mutual support in the event of attack, and for consultations between the contracting states whenever the peace of the area or the security of the contracting states was threatened (Articles III, IV and V), the Mutual Defense Pact also established three agencies, similar to the three bodies founded by the Joint Defense Treaty:²

1. The Supreme Council, composed of the foreign ministers and war ministers of the contracting states, was to be "the official authority from which the Commander-in-Chief of the Joint Command shall receive all directives relating to military policy." (Article VI, paragraph a.)

2. The War Council—reminiscent of the Permanent Military Commission established in the Joint Defense Treaty—was to be composed of the Chiefs of Staff of the two contracting states (Article VII, paragraph a). It was charged with tasks similar to those entrusted, in the earlier Treaty, to the Permanent Military Commission.

3. Just as the Joint Defense Treaty had established a Joint Command composed of a Commander-in-Chief and a General Council of Chiefs-of-Staff (in Section V of the Military Annex to the Treaty), so, too, the Egyptian-Syrian Mutual Defense Pact established a Joint Command consisting of the Commander-in-Chief, the General Staff, and "the units detached for the security of the Joint Command and the conduct of its activities." (Article VIII, paragraph a.)

² See Chapter X, Section 3.

Despite these similarities between the pan-Arab Joint Defense Treaty of 1950 and the Egyptian-Syrian Mutual Defense Pact of 1955, the later agreement contained provisions which had been lacking in the earlier agreement. These additional provisions were designed primarily to enhance the realizability and ensure the effectiveness of the Egyptian-Syrian agreement.

The Joint Command contemplated in the Joint Defense Treaty was to be set up in time of war; and the Commander-in-Chief was to be appointed upon the outbreak of hostilities—as was implicit in Section V of the Military Annex to the Treaty. But the Joint Command contemplated in the Egyptian-Syrian Mutual Defense Pact, on the other hand, was to be “permanent, functioning in peacetime and wartime” (Article VIII, paragraph a). Moreover, the Commander-in-Chief was to exercise vital integrating functions in peacetime and to prepare for “all eventualities arising from any possible armed attack on one of the two countries or on their forces” (Article VII, paragraph b, sub-paragraph 2). Furthermore, the contracting states undertook to place all their “striking units” at the disposal of the Joint Command “in peace and wartime” (Article IX, paragraph a); and to establish a “joint fund” for financing the Joint Command (Article X).

The basic differences, however, between the pan-Arab Treaty and the Egyptian-Syrian Pact pertained not to the texts and provisions of the two agreements, but to their respective outcomes in practice. While nothing tangible came out of the pan-Arab Joint Defense Treaty, the Egyptian-Syrian Mutual Defense Pact was put into effect immediately. The Supreme Council created in Article VI of the Pact was soon established; and the first Commander-in-Chief of the Joint Command was appointed on November 8, 1955.

The Egyptian-Syrian Mutual Defense Pact was first invoked during the Turkish-Syrian crisis of September, 1957. On October 13, 1957, it was officially announced by the Joint Command, from its headquarters in Cairo, that “basic elements” of the Egyptian

armed forces had been moved to Syria. The transfer of Egyptian troops to reinforce Syrian defense establishments (as a precautionary measure necessitated by the concentration of Turkish troops in close proximity to the Syrian border) had begun in mid-September, in consequence of a decision to that effect taken by the Joint Command on September 11, 1957.

* * *

Not only its military provisions, however, but also the economic provisions of the pan-Arab Treaty of Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation were destined to have their counterpart within the context of Egyptian-Syrian collaboration. On September 2, 1956, Syria and Egypt reached an economic agreement for industrial cooperation, providing for the formation of joint companies with joint capital for economic projects. This was followed a year later by another agreement envisaging more far-reaching integration of the economies of the two countries. This new agreement, signed on September 3, 1957, established a joint committee charged with making recommendations within three months for the "unification" of the economies of the two states. On November 13, 1957, another economic agreement, designed to facilitate the transfer of funds, was concluded.

* * *

While the integration of the economies and the defense establishments of Egypt and Syria was proceeding actively, a third facet of inter-governmental collaboration was receiving serious attention.

On March 15, 1957, the Arab Cultural Unity Agreement³ was concluded. Aiming at unifying educational methods and enhanc-

³ All extracts from the Arab Cultural Unity Agreement cited in the sequel are taken from *Syria: 1957* (published by the Directorate-General of Information of the Syrian Government, Damascus, 1957), pp. 140-141.

ing cultural cooperation between the contracting states, this Agreement was envisioned as a contribution, on the cultural-educational plane, to the achievement of Arab unity.

In Article II of this Agreement, the contracting states undertook to work for:

“The strengthening of cooperation among them in the fields of science, education, and culture; the exchange of information, results of scientific and technical research, and teachers; the admission of students, cultural institutions, and universities; the holding of conferences, meetings, seminars, and educational courses; the coordination of sports and arts activities; and the achievement of cooperation between committees, councils, and bodies—official or otherwise—that are concerned with these matters.”

Articles IV and V of the Agreement required the ministries of education in the contracting states to draw up “unified basic programs” for the elementary, intermediate, and secondary stages of education; and to complete these programs at least one month before the commencement of the 1957/1958 school year.

Article X welcomed the accession of other Arab countries to the Agreement, and declared that its ultimate aim was to achieve complete cultural unity in the Arab World.

Article XI required the contracting states to work for the unification of laws and regulations relating to culture and education, in conformity with the basic principles embodied in the Agreement.

The Agreement had six Annexes designed to spell out, in specific terms, the basic provisions contained in the main body of the Agreement. Annex I discussed in detail the diverse facets of cooperation described in Article II of the Agreement. Annexes III, IV and V dealt with examinations, teachers’ training, and technical education respectively. And Annex VI defined the tasks of the Joint Committee, which was entrusted with enforcing the provisions of the Agreement, tackling such problems as might arise from its application, and supervising the evolution of the

Agreement with a view to the strengthening of cultural unity between the contracting states.

3

These agreements between Egypt and Syria, concluded from 1955 to 1957, may be looked upon as successive landmarks in a process of gradual, *functional unification* of the two countries, in preparation for their eventual *political unification*. If the process was triggered by the collapse of the collective security system contemplated in the pan-Arab Treaty of Joint Defense of 1950, the subsequent stages of that process and its final outcome were animated by a positive impulse for unification.

A distinction must be made, however, between the conclusion and speedy enforcement of these successive agreements between Egypt and Syria, as indicative of a determination on the part of the governments of these two countries to accomplish *political unity*, on the one hand, and the serviceability of these agreements, when acceded to by other Arab states, for achieving cohesion and ensuring inter-governmental *coordination* among all acceding states, *short of political unity*, on the other hand.

For it must be observed that bilateral agreements similar to the Egyptian-Syrian Mutual Security Pact were subsequently concluded between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and between Egypt and Yemen; and a trilateral agreement of a similar nature was concluded in October 1956 between Egypt, Syria and Jordan. Moreover, Jordan was a party to the Arab Cultural Unity Agreement of 1957.

This phenomenon must be explained in terms of the Arab situation between 1955 and 1957.

In this period of fluidity in intra-Arab governmental affiliations, which followed the signing of the Baghdad Pact, similarity in concepts of *foreign policy* entertained by certain Arab governments tended to overshadow such dissimilarity as may have existed between their respective concepts of *domestic socio-political organization*. At least in part, this phenomenon was

occasioned by the fact that it was the debate on Arab foreign policy, between the "pro-Western" and the "neutralist" schools of thought, that received all the attention of the outside world, and most of the attention of the Arabs themselves. The foreign-policy debate overshadowed the other interrelated aspects of the Arab "Great Debate."

Two developments which occurred in 1955—the year in which the process of *functional unification* was initiated between Egypt and Syria—served to focus international and Arab attention on the Arab debate on *foreign policy*, and thereby to relegate to the background the Arab debate on *domestic* policy:

In the first place, the accedence of Britain to the Baghdad Pact in mid-1955 revealed the inherent propensity of that agreement, if not its generative intention, to become a Western-Mideastern alliance.

In the second place, the purchase by Egypt of arms from Soviet Bloc countries, a few months later, indicated the determination of Egypt and other "neutralist" Arab states to extricate themselves from their former exclusive dependence upon the Powers of the West; to establish their independence of both Power Blocs, Eastern as well as Western; and to exercise their sovereign right to initiate new relations, or to cultivate and develop existing relations, with all Powers, on a basis of reciprocity, and within the framework of freely-negotiated, freely-concluded, mutually-defined, and reciprocally-implemented relations.⁴

Accordingly, the "Great Debate" in the Arab mind, between the dynamic and the static brands of nationalism, came to be viewed, in the outside world and by many Arabs as well, in terms of its foreign-policy implications, and in oblivion to its implications with respect to domestic forms of socio-political organization and intra-Arab relations.

⁴ In the article, "Arab Nationalism Today" (*Current History*, November, 1957), we examined at some length the historical factors which rendered 1955 the decisive year for the emergence of Arab neutralism as a practical policy in the Arab world.

It was at that time, and under the impact of the over-simplification of the import of the "Great Debate" and the narrowing-down of its scope, that some Arab governments (whether monarchic or republican, and whether animated by dynamic or by static ideas of national organization) came to define and envision their mutual affinities primarily, if not exclusively, in terms of the similarity in their respective outlooks on foreign policy, and to conclude agreements of mutual defense on that basis. At that time, the Kings of Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Yemen harbored concepts of foreign policy akin to the "neutralist" concepts of the governments of the Republics of Egypt and Syria; hence the conclusion of bilateral and multilateral pacts of mutual defense by the "neutralist" governments of these five Arab countries in 1955 and 1956.

But these inter-governmental affiliations, and the underlying governmental persuasions also, soon began to change. This change became evident early in 1957. The proclamation of the Eisenhower Doctrine, the visit of King Saud to Washington, and the internal crisis in Jordan—all of which occurred in the early months of 1957—had the joint impact of shaking the "neutralism" of the Jordanian and Saudi Arabian Kings and, therefore, loosening the informal alliance of the five Arab governments and reshuffling once more the inter-governmental affiliations of the Arab states.

Only the partnership between Egypt and Syria (sealed in the identity of their outlooks on foreign and domestic policy) and the affiliation of the Kingdom of Yemen with those two Arab Republics (inspired by identity of their views on foreign policy) survived the disturbance in the pattern of Arab inter-governmental affinities and affiliations in the spring of 1957.

It was because of these circumstances that, in the subsequent progress towards unity, Egypt and Syria were to take the lead in outright unification, and Yemen was to associate itself with them in a federal relationship, while the Kings of Iraq and Jordan

were to pursue a separate path towards Arab unity, via the federation of their two Kingdoms.

4

As we have already suggested, the Egyptian-Syrian agreements were successive milestones along the path of *functional* unification designed to lead to final *political* unity.

On January 16, 1956, the new Egyptian Constitution was proclaimed. For the first time in Egypt's modern history, the Constitution of the state announced that Egypt was "an Arab state" and that the Egyptian people was "a part of the Arab nation" (Article I).⁵ This was reminiscent of the Syrian Constitution of September 5, 1950, which had proclaimed, in its Preamble and in Article I (paragraph 3), that the Syrian people was a part of the Arab nation and looked forward to the day when the Arab nation would be unified in one state.⁶ When the Egyptian Constitution was ratified by the people in a referendum vote on June 23, 1956, Syrians and Egyptians were experiencing an upsurge of sentiment for unity. The Syrian Parliament voted, only eleven days later, to abolish passports and visa-requirements between Syria and other Arab countries on a basis of reciprocity. On the following day—July 5, 1956—the Syrian Parliament unanimously approved plans for setting up a committee to negotiate with Egypt for a federal union of the two countries. On January 5, 1957, the Premier of Syria announced that his government would soon appoint a ministerial committee for the same purpose.

The events of the spring of 1957, to which we alluded in the preceding section, delayed for a few months the progress towards unification. But, in November, 1957, the call for unity was taken up again in earnest.

⁵ The full text of the Constitution may be found in *Constitution of the Egyptian Republic*, Amiriyya Press, Cairo, 1956.

⁶ The full text of the Constitution of the Republic of Syria of September 5, 1950, may be found in Davis, Helen Miller, *Constitutions, Electoral Laws, Treaties of States in the Near and Middle East*, Duke University Press, 1953, pp. 402-433.

On November 19, 1957, an Egyptian-Syrian parliamentary session was held in Damascus. It was attended by the Syrian deputies and a visiting delegation composed of forty members of the Egyptian National Assembly, headed by the Vice-Chairman of the Assembly. The joint session unanimously approved a motion urging the Egyptian and Syrian governments immediately to begin negotiations to create a "federal union" of the two countries.

On the same day, the Egyptian National Assembly unanimously adopted a similar resolution.

Negotiations between the two governments soon began; and on January 26, 1958, a joint statement issued by the two governments announced that the final draft of a treaty of unification was being composed.

On February 1, 1958, a formal proclamation of the merger of Egypt and Syria into the United Arab Republic was made in Cairo.⁷

On February 5, 1958, the President of Egypt presented to his country's National Assembly a comprehensive statement, embodying the announcement of the formation of the United Arab Republic and a seventeen-point program outlining the procedure by which the union of Egypt and Syria would be effected.⁸ On the same day, the President of Syria made a similar announcement before the Syrian Parliament, embodying the same program. The President of Syria added, in his announcement, that it was Syria that had initiated the move for unity; and he proposed that President Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt be the first President of the United Arab Republic.

Both the Syrian Parliament and the Egyptian National Assembly gave their unanimous approval to the measures blue-printed by their respective governments in bilateral negotiations and announced by their respective Presidents.

⁷ The text of this proclamation may be found in Appendix A.

⁸ The text of this seventeen-point program may be found in Appendix B.

The formation of the United Arab Republic, the seventeen-point program, and the naming of Nasser as its first President, were taken to the peoples of the two states in country-wide plebiscites on February 21, 1958. They received the approval of the peoples by overwhelming majorities.

The Provisional Constitution of the New Republic was promulgated on March 5, 1958.⁹

5

Thus, the first union in modern times between formerly-independent Arab states was born.

It will be noted that the second approach to the unification of the Arab states, which bore its earliest fruits in 1958 in the founding of the United Arab Republic, differed from the first approach, which had produced the League of Arab States thirteen years earlier, in two respects:

In their second approach to unity, Arab nationalists took into account the factors which had initially weakened the League and subsequently handicapped it in its performance of its tasks. The constitutional defectiveness and the practical ineffectiveness of the League had emanated from the same source: namely, unmitigated state sovereignty. The costly lessons learned by Arab nationalists from the first experiment had to be applied in the second, if it was to succeed.

Furthermore, the new approach recognized the facts of political life in the Arab World. Real unity and real pan-Arab comprehensiveness were known to be at least as incapable of simultaneous attainment in 1958 as they had been between 1943 and 1945. In the first experiment, comprehensiveness was selected at the cost of cohesion; in the second experiment, cohesion was given primacy.

* * *

⁹ The full text of this Provisional Constitution may be found in Appendix C.

The new union was conceived in mutual consent, and born by means of an orderly and free procedure. In its birth, the peoples, parliaments and governments of the states concerned took part. Originating in the peoples, the urge for union was articulated by their respective parliaments. Acting under the mandate of their parliaments, the two governments held the discussions in which the concrete plans for unification were drawn up. These plans then went from the governments to their respective parliaments for approval; and from parliaments, the plans went to the peoples for ratification. *The circuit was completed: from peoples to parliaments to governments, and back from governments to parliaments to peoples.*

* * *

The christening of the newborn union is of great symbolical significance.

Two proud names, as ancient as history itself, evoking venerable memories, familiar alike to the archeologist engrossed in his explorations of the remains of pre-historic man, to the faithful of all monotheistic religions well-versed in their respective Scriptures, and to the student of modern international affairs, have now been relegated to the past. By the choice of the peoples themselves, these names have been abandoned as designations of national identification, and have given way to a new name—the United Arab Republic.

The selection of the new name reflects the three impulses animating the creation of the new political being.

The term "UNITED" expresses the unitarian character of the relationship now established between the two former states. No vestige of sovereignty, exercised independently by either state, was to linger in the new set-up; no prerogative of authority was to be jealously withheld from the agencies in which ultimate sovereignty was now vested by the constituent parts. Former Egypt and former Syria, in entering the union, doffed their

former separateness and identities at the threshold, to emerge inside as but two regions of one state.

The term "ARAB" in the name of the new union refers not only to the national character of the peoples of the two former states, as defined in their respective former constitutions, but also to the hoped-for extension of the union so as to include all Arab countries. The term "Arab," therefore, designates the *national identity* of the population of the new state, as well as the *range* of their hopes for *future extension*. It refers to the actual Arab nature of the new state, which identifies it nationally at present, as well as to its potentially pan-Arab reach. It emphasizes, in short, the view of the architects of the United Arab Republic that this union is but a nucleus for greater Arab unity, and stresses their hope that complete unity be achieved in the years to come. Hence the invitation extended to all other Arab states, while the formation of the United Arab Republic was being proclaimed, to join in the union.¹⁰

Finally, the term "REPUBLIC" describes the form of government obtaining in the constituent states as well as in the newborn union. But the term "Republic" refers to more than mere form of governmental structure. It refers to, and symbolizes, the *total concept of socio-political organization* which is inherent in the dynamic brand of nationalism animating the peoples and governments of former Egypt and Syria and of the new United Arab Republic.



Some observers have wondered at the fact that the urge for unification emanated from Syria. Others have sought to explain this phenomenon in terms of a domestic Syrian situation, real or alleged, which is claimed to have made the unification of Syria with Egypt seem to the leaders of the Syrian government to be the only hope for salvation from internal upheavals. Whatever

¹⁰ See *below*, Section 6 of the present Chapter, and Section 1 of Chapter XIII.

the internal conditions in Syria may have been in the opening weeks of 1958, there is one fundamental fact characterizing the entire career of Syria as a state, from its establishment after the First World War until its merger with Egypt in the United Arab Republic; and this persistent and continuous fact is that the Syrian people has overwhelmingly desired Arab unity, that most Syrians have looked upon the separateness of Syria as a provisional condition which must be altered at the earliest possible opportunity through unification with other Arab states, and that successive Syrian governments—regardless of party-affiliation or type of regime—have invariably championed the idea of Arab unity and have placed themselves in the forefront in the process of accomplishing it. This fact, which has marked the entire lifetime of Syria as a state, outweighs such transitory internal conditions as are claimed to have existed immediately before the formation of the United Arab Republic; and it must be viewed, therefore, as the decisive cause of, and the explanatory reason for, the fact that it was the Syrian government that urged for the immediate unification of Syria and Egypt.

In Chapter V, we examined at length the various causes which determined that the idea of Arab unity be born in the Fertile Crescent, particularly in Syria. Since its conception and birth, this idea of Arab unity has found in Syria its major stronghold. Syria has been not only the cradle but also the most insistent advocate of the idea of Arab unity since the beginning of the modern Arab awakening.

In more recent decades, when the Republic of Syria was carved out of geographical Syria, the post-World War I Syrian state inherited from the wider geographical entity not only its name but also the mantle of the cause of Arab unity. The national anthem of the Republic of Syria sang with equal pride the praise of the golden ages of Arab history in Syria and elsewhere. The Constitution of the Syrian state solemnly proclaimed the determination of the people of Syria to work tirelessly for the realiza-

tion of their sacred aspiration for Arab unity. It stated in its Preamble:

"We, the Representatives of the Syrian Arab People, meeting in a Constituent Assembly . . . , declare that our people is a part of the whole Arab nation, bound to it with its past, present and future, and is looking forward to the day when our Arab nation shall be united in one State. Our people shall, therefore, assiduously strive to fulfil this sacred desire . . ." ¹¹

In the oath which, according to Article LXXV of the Constitution, the President of the Republic was to take before assuming office, he was to swear to "work for the achievement of the unity of the Arab countries." ¹² Similarly, the oath which was to be taken by every member of Parliament before assuming his duty contained an identical phrase (Article XLVI). ¹³

Successive Syrian governments have proposed successive schemes for Arab unity. During the consultations of 1943, which preceded the formation of the League of Arab States, the Syrian Premier announced the readiness of his government to endorse and implement any arrangement for unity which other Arab governments were prepared to make. During the 1944 session of the Preparatory Committee, at which the Alexandria Protocol was written, the Syrian Premier also announced the readiness of Syria to give up its sovereignty for the furtherance of Arab unity. And, after the establishment of the League, the first formal proposal submitted by an Arab government for Arab unity came in January, 1951, from the Syrian Premier. ¹⁴

Public opinion in Syria has been equally expressive of its readiness to surrender state-sovereignty within larger Arab unity. Perusal of an anthology ¹⁵ containing the basic platforms of *all*

¹¹ Davis, *Constitutions, op. cit.*, pp. 402-403.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 418.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 414.

¹⁴ See Izzeddin, *Arab World, op. cit.*, pp. 334-335.

¹⁵ *Al-Ahzaab As-Siyasiyyah fi Suriyyah (Political Parties in Syria*, Ar-Ruwad Publishing Co., Damascus, 1954).

Syrian parties, as authoritatively defined by official party spokesmen, reveals the *unanimous* advocacy of Arab unity by all the political parties established in Syria, despite their disagreement on many a vital objective.

Representatives of *all* political parties and groups in Syria, convening in a national conference in June, 1956, agreed to adopt a common platform on certain basic questions affecting the vital interests of Syria. One of the points on which they all agreed pertained to Arab unity, with particular reference to union with Egypt. The parties unanimously adopted a resolution calling for:

"Expanding the bilateral agreement with Egypt, by concluding an agreement between the two parties covering economic, political, and cultural affairs, so that these agreements may serve as nucleus for an all-embracing Arab unity."¹⁶

It is clear, therefore, that the decisions of the Syrian Parliament in November, 1957, and of the Syrian government in January, 1958, to create a union of Egypt and Syria, were manifestations of a *continuous* policy which successive Syrian governments and parliaments and successive generations of the Syrian people had voiced. *It is this permanent and continuous desire of Syria, government and people, for Arab unity, and not any passing internal situation in January, 1958, real or alleged, that must be viewed as the primary explanation for the eagerness shown by Syria in the early weeks of 1958 to establish the United Arab Republic.*

* * *

One final observation on the United Arab Republic must now be made. It pertains to the future of the union, and the role

¹⁶ *Syria: 1957, op. cit.*, pp. 187-188.

which will be assigned to diversity within the permanent framework, which has yet to be constructed.¹⁷

Until political unification and community of life have succeeded over the years in replacing diversity by a greater measure of homogeneity, the smooth functioning of the union in the foreseeable future will depend to a large extent upon the realistic recognition of such diversity as now exists.

To the extent to which the arrangements which will be made in the permanent Constitution, relative to the separate administration of the two regions of the United Arab Republic, will be realistically flexible, to that extent many of the strains which are otherwise likely to mar the life of the Republic will be ameliorated, if not entirely averted.

If, on the other hand, the *eager idealism* to which we alluded in previous paragraphs, or the *doctrinaire dogmatism* of the nationalist ideology which has been averse to recognizing diversity within the Arab nation (which we examined in Chapters VII and VIII), or such *authoritarian* tendencies as may operate in the planning of the permanent Constitution or in its implementation in daily life, should individually or jointly lead to premature endeavors to submerge diversity beneath the surface of simple uniformity, demanding that unity manifest itself as rigidity and dismissing the counsel of flexibility, then it is not unlikely that unnecessary strains may be created and natural strains aggravated. In such an eventuality, misgivings and unfavorable second thoughts about unity will have been occasioned unnecessarily. Such discontent with a particular form of unity may come to express itself as disillusionment with unity as such.

6

The formation of the United Arab Republic was envisioned as a step towards the unification of all Arab states and the erec-

¹⁷ Only a Provisional Constitution (Appendix C) has been so far worked out; the permanent Constitution remains to be written.

tion of total Arab unity. In their joint "Proclamation" of February 1, 1958, the governments of Egypt and Syria, announcing their agreement to fuse the two countries into the United Arab Republic, declared "that their unity aims at the unification of all the Arab peoples."¹⁸ The Syrian Premier called it "the first step on the path to entire Arab unity."¹⁹ The Syrian President said: "I am sure that our unity today is a seed that will grow. It will be a step followed by others."²⁰ The Egyptian President stated: "Today we live a new and glorious dawn. For the dawn of our unity is here at last."²¹ The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States described the formation of the United Arab Republic as "the beginning of union among all of the Arab states."²² The Permanent Observer of the League at the United Nations viewed the union as "a new milestone on the road to complete Arab unity."²³

Arab public opinion—as represented in the utterances of political parties, in the comments of the press throughout the Arab World, and, above all, in the spontaneous jubilation of the masses—greeted the union with happy excitement, not only for what it was in itself, but also and perhaps primarily for the promise it held for the eventual unification of the Arab World in its entirety and the fulfillment of one of the principal objectives of the Arab national movement.

* * *

Even in the short period of time which has elapsed since the formation of the United Arab Republic, official and semi-official

¹⁸ See Appendix A.

¹⁹ New York *Herald Tribune*, February 2, 1958.

²⁰ New York *Times*, February 2, 1958.

²¹ Address by President Nasser, released by the Press Bureau of the former Egyptian Mission to the United Nations on February 6, 1958.

²² *Arab News and Views* (Arab Information Center, New York), Vol. IV, No. 3, February 20, 1958.

²³ *Ibid.*

actions of diverse kinds have been taken in the direction of greater Arab unity.

In North Africa, representatives of the dominant political parties in Tunisia and Morocco (the Neo-Destour and the Istiqlal parties, respectively), together with the National Committee of the Algerian Revolution (which heads the National Liberation Front), have called for political unification of the three Arab countries of North Africa.²⁴

In Palestine, representatives of the Arabs of the Gaza sector have called for the merger of their sector, as symbolical of the merger of the entire Arab community of Palestine, in the United Arab Republic.

The Kingdom of Yemen, immediately announcing its desire to associate itself federally with the United Arab Republic, implemented that desire when the United Arab States was formed.²⁵

The Hashemite Kingdoms of Iraq and Jordan also realized a similar desire for unity by forming a federation of their own.²⁶

These four phenomena reveal the influence which the unification of Egypt and Syria in the United Arab Republic has exercised on contemporary Arab history in the few months which have elapsed since that unification was accomplished.

Fluidity has overtaken the Arab situation. Rigid boundaries have begun to dissolve under the impact of the heat of the ardent desire for unity. Arab officialdom has begun to loosen its hold on state-sovereignty and to adjust itself to the wishes of the overwhelming majority of Arabs. Arab political realities are in a state of flux which, having been stirred into motion, may not come to rest before many of the marks of the post-1918 era have yielded to new moulds fashioned by the Arabs themselves in accordance with their nationalist ideals.

²⁴ See *below*, Chapter XIII, Section 3.

²⁵ See *below*, Chapter XIII, Section 1.

²⁶ See *below*, Chapter XIII, Section 2.

“A SEED THAT WILL GROW”

1

THE proclamation of the founding of the United Arab Republic was accompanied by an invitation to all Arab states to join. This invitation, indicative of the pan-Arab scope of the nationalist ideology which animated the unification of Egypt and Syria, was indicative also of the *expandability* of the new union.¹

Such expandability has characterized every inter-governmental Arab institution or agreement since the birth of the modern Arab idea of unity. Arab inter-governmental treaties, agencies and structures, have all envisaged and provided for future participation by other Arab states. The first Arab treaties in the 1930's, the Protocol and the Pact of the League of Arab States in the 1940's, and all agreements concluded under the auspices of the League or independently of it in the 1950's, have invariably contained clauses proclaiming their expandability, and permitting, indeed welcoming, the participation or accedence of

¹ See *above*, Chapter XII, Section 6.

other Arab states. The proclamation of the formation of the United Arab Republic partook of the same expandable character and exhibited the same tendency.

Furthermore, the expandability of the United Arab Republic was marked by *flexibility*. The invitation addressed to the other Arab states was twofold: to join the United Arab Republic, within the framework of its unitarian form and republican institutions; or to enter into a federal association with it, in which the autonomy and internal institutions of the invitee could be preserved. The joint "Proclamation" of the governments of Egypt and Syria of February 1, 1958, said: "In deciding on the unity of both peoples, the participants . . . affirm that the door is open for participation to any Arab state desirous of joining them in a union or federation."²

This flexibility betokened a realistic acknowledgment, by the architects of the United Arab Republic, of the fact of diversity in the Arab World: socio-cultural diversity in the conditions and degrees of attainment of the peoples, and political diversity in the concepts of political organization cherished by the governments.

* * *

The identity of the first, and so far the only, Arab state which has responded favorably to the invitation extended to all Arab states by the United Arab Republic testifies to the wisdom of the flexibility which marked the invitation. For Yemen, the responding state, is monarchic in its form of government, and is characterized by certain fundamental patterns of socio-economic organization which would otherwise have rendered its immediate and outright unification with the United Arab Republic unattainable. Hence the formation of a new federal union, the United Arab States, associating Yemen with the United Arab Republic in a relationship which ensures the essential advantages of unity

² See Appendix A.

without disregarding the conditions of diversity and the resultant need for internal autonomy.

The formation of this federal union, and the Charter of the United Arab States,³ were announced five weeks after the proclamation of the founding of the United Arab Republic. The announcement was made in Damascus on March 8, 1958, by the President of the United Arab Republic and the Crown Prince of Yemen.

The Charter of the United Arab States emphasized the expandability of the newer union in Article I. It also emphasized the flexibility of the union in Articles II and XII, which respectively declared that each constituent state would preserve its system of government and its international status, and that the law organizing education and culture in the union would regulate the *coordination* of the educational and cultural activities of the component-states of the union *in stages*. The other substantive articles, however, defined the functions of government which were to be unified: foreign policy (Article VI), diplomatic and consular representation (Article VII), and armed forces (Article VIII). While establishing the principles of freedom of movement in the union (Article V), and of equal rights of all citizens to work and hold public office throughout the union (Article IV), the Charter entrusted to subsequent laws the definition of the precise measure of unification to be injected into the economic life of the union: the development of production, the exploitation of natural resources, and the coordination of economic activities (Article IX); currency affairs (Article X); and regulations governing the projected customs union (Article XI).

2

If Yemen, although monarchic in its system of government, found it possible to react positively to the expandability of the United Arab Republic—with the foreign-policy concepts of

³ The text of the Charter may be found in Appendix D.

which it was in complete agreement—it was because of the flexibility marking that expandability. By virtue of this flexibility, Yemen could associate itself with the United Arab Republic while, at the same time, preserving its internal autonomy and its distinctive socio-political system.

Two other Arab Kingdoms, Iraq and Jordan, however, pursued a different course.

Entertaining concepts of foreign policy and views on the patterns of domestic socio-political organization, which set them apart from the United Arab Republic, these two Arab Kingdoms were unable to accept the invitation of that Republic to join in its unity or to associate with it federally.

On the other hand, it was equally impossible for Iraq and Jordan to remain unaffected by the current of Arab unity set in motion by the formation of the United Arab Republic. For the peoples of the two Kingdoms were animated by a strong urge for Arab unity; and the governments of the two Kingdoms had entertained, from the beginning of the lifetime of their respective states, a concept of Arab unity of their own, derived from the political aspirations of the Arab Revolt of 1916, and expressed in terms of specific projects (of "Fertile Crescent" or "Greater Syria" unity) intermittently since the early 1940's.

Unable to remain inactive, and also unable to participate in the new Arab union, the two Kingdoms of Iraq and Jordan therefore found themselves constrained to chart their own separate path towards Arab unity. They formed the Arab Union, on February 14, 1958, two weeks after the founding of the United Arab Republic.⁴

* * *

The federation of Iraq and Jordan was a resumption, in the Arab situation of 1958, of earlier efforts towards unity made by

⁴ The text of the Agreement forming the Arab Union may be found in Appendix E; and the text of the Constitution of the Arab Union may be found in Appendix F.

the great-grandfather and the respective grandfathers of the contemporary monarchs of the two Kingdoms.⁵ In each successive attempt, however, the effort to attain the selfsame goal has had to adjust itself to the conditions of the day and to take into account the changes wrought by history in previous years.

The dream of King Husain, the leader of the Arab Revolt of 1916, was of a united Arab Kingdom comprising geographical Syria, Iraq and the Hijaz, under his suzerainty and with the support of his wartime ally, Britain. His abdication from the throne of Hijaz, and British and French betrayal in the Fertile Crescent, militated against Husain's fulfillment of this aspiration.

Husain's son, Faisal, was animated by the same desire in the aftermath of the First World War. In 1920, he accepted the throne of a united Syria from its people, amidst the announced dedication of the peoples of Iraq and Syria to the ideal of political and economic union between the two countries. But the French occupation of the interior of Syria, and Faisal's enforced abdication, which took place four months after the proclamation of the Syrian kingdom, shattered Faisal's dream. He was content with the throne of Iraq alone in 1921.

Faisal's elder brother, Abdullah, received from Britain a small principedom. The area east of the River Jordan, in the southern sector of geographical Syria, was established as the Principedom of Transjordan in 1923. The ambition of Husain and his Hashemite family, having been twice frustrated, was allowed by Abdullah to remain dormant for two decades.

In 1941, when Anthony Eden made his statement indicating the reversal of Britain's former attitudes towards Arab nationalism and Arab unity and the adoption of a new British policy of concurrence in, and mild support for, such programs of unification as might be agreed upon by the Arabs, the old Hashemite concept of Arab unity was reactivated. Abdullah and Nuri as-Said successively submitted to the British Government, in 1941 and

⁵ See *above*, Chapter VIII, Section 3; Chapter IX, Section 2; and *below*, Chapter XIV, Section 1.

1943 respectively, two cognate proposals for unification of the Fertile Crescent area. Despite minor differences, these two proposals were essentially identical. They envisaged a United Syria linked to Iraq in a federal tie, under Hashemite rule and with the blessing of the British Government. It will be noted that the Hijaz was no longer included in the Hashemite vision of Arab unity in the early 1940's; for, in the meantime, the Hashemites had been ousted from the Arabian Peninsula by Ibn Saud, formerly sovereign of Najd and subsequently King of the union of Najd and the Hijaz—the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. However, if the newer versions of the earlier Hashemite concepts of Arab unity in 1916 and 1920 took cognizance in the 1940's of the severance of the Hijaz from Hashemite domains, these versions continued to envisage the inclusion of Lebanon, Palestine and the Syrian state, as well as Transjordan and Iraq, in the projected Fertile Crescent unity.

The pan-Arab inter-governmental consultations and conferences of 1943 and 1944, leading to the formation of the League of Arab States in 1945, temporarily put an end to the efforts of Iraq and Transjordan to unify the lands of the Fertile Crescent—although Abdullah, after becoming King of Transjordan (and, later on, King of Jordan), resumed his efforts intermittently. It was not until fluidity was introduced into the Arab situation in 1958, in consequence of the unification of the former Republics of Egypt and Syria, that the old Hashemite idea of Arab unity was once more revived. Just as in the preceding incarnations of the idea, however, the new resurrection took cognizance of such changes as had in the meantime overtaken the Arab situation.

The first Hashemite reaction to the advance announcement, on January 26, 1958, of the then-imminent unification of Egypt and Syria took the form of an approach, initiated a few days later by the King of Jordan, to the other Hashemite King of Iraq and to King Saud of Saudi Arabia. Both in its inclusiveness as well as in its exclusiveness, this approach betokened recognition of the

change in Arab circumstances which had taken place in the preceding fifteen years.

Palestine had been lost; the larger part of Palestine had become Israel; the eastern sector of the remainder of Palestine had been already integrated with former Transjordan, to form the Kingdom of Jordan; and the south-western sector (the Gaza strip) had been placed under Egyptian occupation, pending final settlement of the Palestine problem. *Lebanon* had come to be recognized, in its post-1920 frontiers, by all Arab states within the Arab League, as well as on an international scale. The Republic of *Syria* was actively preparing to join Egypt in the formation of the United Arab Republic. Hence the exclusion of the three Fertile Crescent territories of Palestine, Lebanon and Syria from the new 1958-version of the Hashemite concept of Arab unity.

On the other hand, the King of Jordan apparently envisaged the possibility that Saudi Arabia (which had been excluded in the 1940's from the concept of Fertile Crescent unity) might be brought in January 1958 into the desired arrangements, and that the Saudi King might find a common ground for association with the two Hashemite monarchs in the presumed necessity for all Arab monarchic regimes to meet by joint action the mounting tide of republicanism and dynamic nationalism symbolized by the regimes of Egypt and Syria and by the then-imminent United Arab Republic.

Failing to obtain the endorsement of the King of Saudi Arabia, the two Hashemite monarchs proceeded to form their Arab Union without Saud's participation.

The old Hashemite idea of Arab Revolt days persisted; only its territorial scope had changed, in accordance with the change of circumstances. Instead of the union of geographical Syria in its entirety, Iraq, and the Hijaz, contemplated by their great-grandfather four decades earlier, the two Hashemite Kings could integrate in 1958 only the second of those three areas and a small sector of the first. But the continuity of the Hashemite idea, not-

withstanding the shrinkage of its geographical scope, was nevertheless attested to in the Preamble of the Agreement on the federation of Iraq and Jordan, which stated:

"Whereas: the mission of the Arab Revolt, for which its leader has striven, passed to the sons and grandsons and was inherited by generation after generation to remain always as a flame illuminating the path of the Arab nation. . . .

"Therefore: the two Hashemite states decide to form a federation between themselves based upon these sublime aims."⁶

Furthermore, Article VII of the Agreement stated:

"The Arab Revolt flag will be the flag of the Federation and the flag of each of the two states."

* * *

Each of the two Hashemite Kingdoms federated in the Arab Union has maintained its identity and autonomy. According to Article II of the Agreement:

"Each of the two states reserves its integral state entity, its sovereignty, and its existing government."

Similarly, Article II of the Constitution of the Arab Union stated:

"With due regard for the provisions of this Constitution, each member-state of the Union will maintain its independent international status and its existing system of rule."⁷

Many of the vital functions of government, however, have been declared subject to unification. According to the initial Agreement of February 14, 1958, foreign policy, diplomatic representation, the armed forces, customs laws, and educational

⁶ The full text of the Agreement forming the Arab Union may be found in Appendix E.

⁷ The full text of the Constitution of the Arab Union may be found in Appendix F.

curricula were to be immediately unified (Article IV of the Agreement), while the determination was also expressed to unify the currency and to coordinate the economic and financial policy of the two states in due course (Article V of the Agreement). In Chapter V, on the "Authority of the Union," the Constitution of the Arab Union spelled out in greater detail the governmental functions that were delegated by the member-states to the federal government, as follows: foreign affairs and diplomatic and consular representation; negotiation of treaties, pacts and international agreements; protection of the states of the Union and preservation of their security; the armed forces; the Supreme Defense Council; customs and customs legislation; coordination of financial and economic policy; currency and financial affairs; unification of educational policy, programs and curricula; highways and communications; and any other functions "decided by the Union Council by a two-thirds majority to be a Union affair, provided that consent is obtained from the governments of member-States." On the other hand, "all other affairs and powers" were to remain under the authority of the member-states (Article LXII).

3

The formation of the United Arab Republic on February 1, 1958, set in motion a process of Arab unification which, within two weeks, had created the Arab Union and, within five weeks, the United Arab States. Seven weeks after the founding of the United Arab Republic, still another Arab union began to be erected in another corner of the Arab World: the Federation of the Arab States of North Africa.

The North African sector of the Arab World is collectively known, in Arab nationalist parlance, as *al-Maghrib al-Arabi*, or the "Arab West," it being the westernmost sector of the Arab World. Individually, the three North African countries of Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco are known as *al-Maghrib al-Adna*,

al-Maghrib al-Awsat, and *al-Maghrib al-Aqsa* respectively, i.e., the Near, Middle and Far West. The projected federation of these three Arab lands is commonly designated the Federation of *al-Maghrib al-Arabi*.

By virtue of their relative remoteness from other Arab countries, their detachment from the rest of the Arab World by France in the Nineteenth Century, and their resultant concentration on combating French domination while other Arab lands were principally engrossed in wrestling with Ottoman or British rule, the Arabs of North Africa have entertained the idea of a North African union in the first instance. This may perhaps be likened to the ideas of "Union of the Nile Valley" and "Union of the Fertile Crescent" which, at one stage or another in their evolution, the peoples of other Arab sectors have entertained.⁸ While the pan-Arab vision came to prevail in other Arab sectors, and while the League of Arab States came to embody that vision institutionally in 1945,⁹ however, the peoples of North Africa remained engrossed in their separate struggles for liberation against French domination. Unlike Libya and the Sudan, the two North African countries of Tunisia and Morocco did not rush to join the League of Arab States when they gained their independence in 1956. By that time, the Algerian War of Independence had broken out; and Tunisians and Moroccans looked upon Algerian liberation as but one phase of their own emancipation, and continued, therefore, to view North African independence as an unfinished task calling for continued struggle. In the meantime, the political leaders of Morocco and Tunisia, including the King of the former and the President of the latter, continued to voice eagerness not only for consolidation of their struggles but also for political unification in the era of independence.

Shortly after the formation of the United Arab Republic, the sentiment in North Africa in favor of political unification began

⁸ See *above*, Chapter VIII, Section 3.

⁹ See *above*, Chapter IX, Sections 6 and 8.

to express itself in deeds and arrangements, not merely—as theretofore—in utterances and statements.

* * *

The preparatory work for unification was done by the dominant political parties of the three North African countries, with the blessing of the governments of the two independent North African states, Tunisia and Morocco.

From March 19 to 22, 1958, a preliminary conference was held between representatives of the Istiqlal Party of Morocco and the Neo-Destour Party of Tunisia. At this conference, the urgent need was recognized for holding a *pan-Maghribian* conference, in order to bring the question of North African federation from the domain of aspiration and sentiment to the stage of practical application.¹⁰ This *pan-Maghribian* conference opened on April 27, 1958, in the city of Tangier, and was designated the "Tangier Conference for the Unification of the Arab *Maghrib*."

Participating in the Tangier Conference were representatives of the major political parties of Tunisia and Morocco (the Neo-Destour and the Istiqlal Parties respectively), and of the Algerian Front for National Liberation. Observers from Libya and Mauritania were also present. The Algerian Delegation included three members of the Committee of Coordination and Implementation of the Algerian Front for National Liberation (F.N.L.) and two Permanent Delegates of the F.N.L. in Morocco. The Moroccan Delegation included the President, Secretary-General, Assistant Secretary-General, and three members of the Executive Committee of the Istiqlal Party, as well as the Secretary-General of the Moroccan Labor Union and the Head of the Resistance Movement. The Tunisian Delegation included the Secretary-General, Assistant Secretary-General, and executive member of the Neo-Destour, the Secretary-General of the Tu-

¹⁰ *News of Morocco* (published by the Embassy of Morocco, Washington, D. C.), Vol. I, No. 4, May 1958.

nisian Labor Union, and three members of the Political Bureau.¹¹

In addition to representing the political parties of Morocco and Tunisia, the Tangier Conference *indirectly* represented the governments of these two countries. For those political parties were the dominant groups in the governments; and some of their officers present at the Conference held cabinet posts—although they attended the Conference in their capacity as officers of their respective parties and not as cabinet-members of their respective governments.

In their opening statements, the Moroccan and Tunisian party leaders emphasized the imminent transition, via the Conference, of *Maghribian* unity from the sphere of sentiment to the sphere of action. The Moroccan Delegate asserted that the purpose of the Conference was to "seek practical methods which will make *Maghribian* unity effective." He noted that:

"This meeting will enable us to decide on adequate means and on the nature of the association of our countries in a United *Maghrib*. It will then be for our Governments to study these means and the proposed form of association with a view to their adoption."¹²

Similarly, the Chairman of the Tunisian Delegation asserted:

"The Tangier Conference has means of action of undoubted efficacy, as it groups together liberation movements which are both strong and tested, and which represent the wishes of their peoples for the realization of the unity of the *Maghrib*. Independent Governments . . . are prepared to support the Conference's decisions . . ."¹³

* * *

¹¹ *Statements & Documents* (published by the Embassy of Morocco, Washington, D. C.), Vol. I, No. 3, May 15, 1958; pp. 1-2.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

The Tangier Conference for the Unification of the Arab *Maghrib* lasted from April 27 to April 30, 1958. It adopted, *inter alia*, a "Resolution on the Unity of the Arab *Maghrib*"¹⁴ in which it asserted that "the unanimous will of the peoples of the Arab *Maghrib*" was "to unite their destiny in the tight solidarity of their interests," and that "the time has come for them to cement this desire for union within the framework of common institutions." It therefore decided "to work towards the realization of this union."

As far as the *form* of association was concerned, the Tangier Conference declared that it considered "the federal form to be the most responsive to the realities of the participating countries."

As for *means*, the Conference envisioned a "transitory phase," during which it proposed the establishment of an "Arab *Maghrib* Consultative Assembly, emanating from the local assemblies of Tunisia and Morocco and from the National Council of the Algerian Revolution," empowered "to study questions of common interest and formulate recommendations to the local executive organs." The Conference also recommended that "periodic meetings" and "other meetings whenever called for by existing circumstances" be held between "the local leaders of the three countries" for consultation on the common problems as well as for examining the manner in which the recommendations of the projected Consultative Assembly were being executed. Finally, the Conference advised the governments of the North African countries "not to commit separately the destiny of North Africa, in the fields of foreign affairs and defense" pending the establishment of "federal institutions."

In order to ensure continued coordinated action in furtherance of the purposes and proposals of the Tangier Conference, a "Permanent Secretariat of the Conference for the Unification of the Arab *Maghrib*" was set up. A *communiqué* issued by the Conference stated:

¹⁴ The full text of the resolution may be found in Appendix G.

"The Conference has decided to create a Permanent Secretariat for assuring the execution of its decisions.

"This Secretariat shall be composed of six members, with two delegates representing each of the participating Movements, who will constitute two bureaus with headquarters in Tunis and Rabat respectively.

"The Secretariat will meet periodically in either capital.

"The first meeting will be held during the month of May [1958]."¹⁵

* * *

The Conferees immediately cabled the results of their meetings to the King of Morocco and the President of Tunisia, informing them that, "in response to the views they had often expressed, and in response to the unanimous will of the peoples of the Arab *Maghrib*, the Conference had laid down the foundations of a federation."¹⁶

The Conferees also sent cables to the Chiefs of State of all the other Arab countries, informing them that the Conference had laid down "the foundations of a federation which will reinforce the ties of solidarity and fraternal cooperation between the Arab peoples."¹⁷

In his concluding statement to the Conference, the Istiqlal leader who presided over the meetings declared that the world will know that "the unity of the Arab *Maghrib* is no longer a dream, but shall henceforth be a reality." He added that this unity will go down in history as one phase of the evolution of the Arab World. "We cannot stay out of the greater Arab family," he said, "and it would be an error to try to detach us [from it]."¹⁸

As was to be expected, the governments of Tunisia and Morocco and the Committee of Coordination and Implementation

¹⁵ *Statements & Documents, op. cit.*, Vol. I, No. 3, May 15, 1948; p. 12.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13. ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

of the Algerian F.N.L. soon endorsed the recommendations of the Tangier Conference. In a statement made on May 1, 1958—the day following the adjournment of the Conference—the King of Morocco said:

“The unity of North Africa is one of our most cherished hopes and we are now entering the phase of realization.”¹⁹

The Government of Libya has also associated itself with the results of the Conference. (It will be recalled that Libya was represented by observers at the Tangier Conference.) On May 11, 1958, representatives of the three Movements which had participated in the Conference were received by the King of Libya, and were informed of the adherence of the Libyan government to the resolutions adopted at Tangier.²⁰

The stumbling-block in the path of immediate unification of the Arab *Maghrib* is the status of Algeria, where the war of independence, launched on November 1, 1954, continues unabated. The Tangier Conference had recommended “the establishment of an Algerian Government, after consultation with the Tunisian and Moroccan Governments.”²¹ The French upheavals, which precipitated the advent of De Gaulle to the Premiership of France, may have been one of the factors which have led to the postponement, for the time being, of the formation of a Free Algerian Government.

The prompt establishment of a Federation of the Arab *Maghrib*, and the form of Algerian participation in this federal union, will depend upon the outcome of De Gaulle's policies for Algeria, upon the degree of their acceptability to the Algerians, and upon whether or not it will be necessary to form a Free Algerian Government.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁰ *News of Morocco, op. cit.*, Vol. I, No. 5, June, 1958.

²¹ *Statements & Documents, op. cit.*, Vol. I, No. 3, May 15, 1958; pp. 7-8.

EVALUATION

1

It is still too early to pass judgment on the diverse unions of Arab states erected during or since February 1958, from the standpoint of their conduct and record. But it is not too early to evaluate these unions from the standpoint of the promise inherent in them, or in terms of the degree to which they constituted a fulfillment of the national aspirations of the Arab peoples.

The formation of the United Arab Republic on February 1, 1958, was the *first real fulfillment* of the longing for political unity felt by the Arabs ever since the completion of the 125-year-old process of Arab fragmentation after the First World War. It was the *first real challenge* to the political framework of the Arab World which emerged from the wreckage wrought by the cataclysmic events of that War.

Other acts of political unification of Arab territories had indeed taken place before 1958. At least four such acts must be mentioned:

1. Much of the Arabian Peninsula was united by Ibn Saud in the 1920's; and the *Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, as it emerged in 1932, was the union of Najd, the Hijaz, Asir and Shammar.

2. The western bank of the Jordan River was united with Transjordan by Abdullah in 1949, when the *Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan* was formally born.

3. The *United Kingdom of Libya* came into being as a federation of Cyrenaica, Fezzan and Tripolitania in 1951 by decision of a national assembly representing those three provinces.

4. *Morocco* was reunited in independence in 1956, when Moroccan sovereignty was restored to the zones formerly under French, Spanish or International administration and these zones were brought together under a unified political system. (The reunification of Morocco was completed in 1958, when the southern zone, formerly under Spanish rule, was also freed and reintegrated within the motherland.)

But *none* of these four acts of unification, accomplished before the birth of the United Arab Republic, can be deemed to have taken place in fulfillment of the nationalist longing for pan-Arab political unity.

For, in the case of the unification of four sectors of the Arabian Peninsula in the *Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, one tribal chieftain defeated and ousted others, and annexed their territories.

In the case of the incorporation of the western bank of the Jordan River into the *Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*, the complex situation resulting from the Arab-Israeli hostilities of 1948/1949 provided Abdullah with the only opportunity he ever had to fulfill a dynastic and personal ambition of long standing, while the people whose lands were amalgamated with former Transjordan had no other real alternative, and therefore no real choice but to submit to the unification.

In the case of *Libya* and *Morocco*, federation and reintegration respectively marched hand in hand with independence; in neither case was union chosen by already-independent states at the cost of an already-enjoyed sovereignty.

Despite the four above-mentioned acts of unification of Arab territories, therefore, the formation of the United Arab Republic constituted the first real fulfillment—albeit partial in territorial scope—of the Arab nationalist longing for pan-Arab political unity.

* * *

The same appraisal may be made of the place of the United Arab Republic in the evolution of the Arab national movement even when we take into account earlier collective, pan-Arab efforts to translate the nationalist idea of Arab unity into political reality. Such efforts had been exerted since 1943. But, as our survey has shown, they produced not political *unity*, but a mere *coordinating association* among sovereign states—namely, the League of Arab States.¹

* * *

From the standpoint of the advance of the Arab national movement towards the attainment of the nationalist objective of political unity, essential differentiation must be made between the formation of the United Arab Republic and the founding of the Arab Union.

The federation of the Kingdoms of Iraq and Jordan, rushed into being within two weeks from the unification of the former Republics of Egypt and Syria, was not preceded nor prepared for by a due process of functional integration such as had paved the way for the establishment of the United Arab Republic from 1955 until 1958.² The formation of the Arab Union was a palpable improvisation.

Moreover, the federation of Iraq and Jordan was obviously prompted, at least in part, by a desire to counteract the tre-

¹ See *above*, Chapters IX and X.

² See *above*, Chapter XII, Section 2.

mendous psychological effect which the proclamation of the United Arab Republic had upon the minds of the populations of Iraq and Jordan, eager as they were for Arab unity and dedicated as they were to Arab nationalism. Arab nationalists, indeed, do not fail to realize that the ultimate import of any union of Arab territories, by whomsoever accomplished, is certain to be salutary in the future, regardless of the real motives which may have spurred the immediate authors of that union into action in the first instance. Nevertheless, few Arab nationalists failed to sense unsavory rivalry and antagonism towards the United Arab Republic behind the expeditiously accomplished unification of Iraq and Jordan.

Furthermore, whereas the call for the unification of Syria and Egypt had emanated from the parliaments of the two countries, and the action was promptly submitted to the populations concerned for approval or rejection in a free plebiscite, the decision to federate Iraq and Jordan was made by the kings and cabinets of these two countries, and was not taken to the peoples for approval. Neither the Agreement of the two kings to form the Arab Union, nor the Permanent Constitution of the Union promulgated by the two kings, was placed before the people. Not even a token gesture was made to evince recognition of the paramount principle, on which the Arab national movement was founded, that the people was the ultimate source of sovereignty. In the days of foreign domination, new states used to be carved out of larger territories by fiat, without recourse to the people at any stage; but, in the era of self-determination, the entire evolution of the Arab national movement was virtually rendered meaningless when states continued to be created or liquidated without consulting the will of the people.

Above all, being a reincarnation in 1958 of the forty-year-old concept of Fertile Crescent unity,³ formulated in 1916 and expressed on several occasions since the First World War, the Arab Union constituted a virtual retrogression from the present stage

³ See *above*, Chapter XIII, Section 2.

of evolution of the Arab national movement to earlier and more rudimentary stages long outgrown by that movement. We suggested before that the principal significance of the establishment of the League of Arab States was the "ingathering" of all major sectors of the Arab World into the pan-Arab fold, and the consequent protection, indeed the promotion, of their potential for political unity.⁴ Even though it did not express the desire of Arab nationalists in the early 1940's for outright political *unity*, the League at least expressed the ardent desire of Arab nationalists for pan-Arab *comprehensiveness*, and registered the fact that the Arab nationalist movement had by then outgrown such concepts of "sectional Arabism" as had been expressed in the calls for "unity of the Nile Valley" in Egypt and "unity of the Fertile Crescent" in Iraq and Transjordan.⁵ The Arab Union of 1958, then, was a virtual reversion to the pre-1945 concepts of Arabism, and a return to earlier phases of Arab nationalism. By contrast, the United Arab Republic and the United Arab States symbolized the newer and more advanced persuasions of Arab nationalism. Integrating Egypt, Syria and Yemen, the United Arab States personified the intersection and merger of the diverse paths of the major Nineteenth Century revivals (in Egypt, the Fertile Crescent, and the Arabian Peninsula) which had heralded the birth of the Arab national movement in general and of the idea of pan-Arab unity in particular.⁶

Entirely apart, then, from the improvisation and the thinly-concealed intra-Arab rivalry which characterized the hasty advent of the Arab Union of Iraq and Jordan on the Arab scene in 1958, this Union fails the test of authenticity, from the standpoint of the Arab national movement, in that it represents a dual retrogression to earlier stages of Arab nationalism, not an advancement and forward evolution thereof. For, in the first place, the founding of the Arab Union reflects neglect of the rightful role

⁴ See *above*, Chapter IX, Section 8.

⁵ See *above*, Chapter IX, Section 6.

⁶ See *above*, Chapter I, Section 1; and Chapter VI, Section 3.

of the people in determining the destiny of their state; and, in the second place, it symbolizes reversion to an obsolete concept of "sectional Arabism" and a retrogression from the plateau of comprehensive pan-Arabism.

It is no wonder, then, that the spontaneous popular jubilation which greeted the proclamation of the United Arab Republic, not only in former Egypt and Syria but throughout the Arab World, was conspicuously lacking even in Iraq and Jordan when the Arab Union was founded. The Arab peoples, who considered the one a milestone in the fulfillment of their national aspirations and a hopeful beginning of the march towards complete Arab unity, attributed no such significance to the other.

* * *

In short: as far as the evolution of the Arab national movement is concerned, the formation of the United Arab Republic is a landmark of great importance. It signifies the first real triumph of Arab nationalism over political fragmentation inflicted on the Arab World by foreign Powers between 1798 and 1922.

Its significance is parallel to the significance of the attainment of independence by formerly non-self-governing Arab countries, and the advance towards reform and progress by underdeveloped Arab societies. Inasmuch as, of the three cardinal goals of Arab nationalism—freedom, progress, and unity—the first had been already attained by eleven Arab states, and the second had been initiated to varying degrees in these states, the victory of Arab nationalism over dismemberment in 1958 marks the beginning of the attainment of the third and final objective of the Arab national movement.

2

We have now evaluated the inauguration of the process of real unification of Arab territories, as represented by the formation

of the United Arab Republic, from the standpoint of the Arab national movement. What about the meaning of Arab unification to the rest of the world?

There are some who view the progress of Arabs towards unity with horror. There are some who dismiss it scornfully, and some who would fain retard it. And there are some who view it, as indeed it should be viewed, as a fulfillment of the legitimate national aspiration of a nation for unified statehood.

It cannot be gainsaid that the urge of Arabs for political unity is *natural*; it is a *normal* desire, on the part of a given national community, for political unity in a world in which nationhood invariably strives for statehood.

Unity, too, is a *legitimate right*, inalienably vested in the Arab nation by virtue of its nationhood.

And, in the final analysis, it cannot be denied that what the peoples of the Arab World wish to do with themselves and for themselves, in their own homeland, is *their own business*. To presume to determine, from the outside, whether the Arab peoples should or should not desire to be united is, to say the least, to desecrate the loudly professed principle of national self-determination and to meddle in what is another people's *exclusive concern*.

Political unity is manifestly capable of exercising wholesome effects on the *economic development* of the Arab World, by enabling Arab economy, particularly its fledgling industrial sector, to develop on a regional, instead of a narrowly provincial, scale. The endemic poverty and underdevelopment, plaguing the Middle East and much of Asia and Africa, bid fair to be forcefully grappled with only within a wider, regional framework, such as political unity amply facilitates.

Similarly, political unity, with the corollary integration of the defense establishments of the component units, is certain to generate a greater sense of security vis-à-vis the outside world and, in the long run, a higher degree of regional stability. *A sense of security such as unity—and unity alone—promises to create may*

well be the only natural means of moderating the current hypersensitivity with respect to sovereignty displayed by Arabs as well as by all newly-emancipated peoples, and enhancing a healthier readiness than now obtains to enter into partnership with other peoples without fear of eventual subordination. Many of the psychological barriers to cooperation with the outside world, whether economic or political, are likely to be transcended upon the advent of self-confidence, born out of internal solidarity and political unity, on the Arab scene.

Finally, greater Arab unity is coming, anyway. The trend towards unity in the Arab World is *beyond resistibility*, whether from within or from without. Hindered and retarded it may be—but not indefinitely arrested.

Like the other national aspirations for freedom and for progress, which animate the Arab national movement and to which the Arab peoples at large are ardently dedicated, the longing for unity cannot be indefinitely frustrated, whether by outside intervention or by domestic suppression, *with impunity*. To the degree to which such legitimate, vital, and popularly-appealing aspirations are obstructed, to that degree the indignation and wrath of the peoples concerned is incurred, and the counsel of moderation is resultantly discarded in favor of extremism and fanaticism. The alternative to Arab unity, and to dynamic Arab nationalism in general, is not eternal submissiveness by Arabs, nor their perpetual acquiescence in fragmentation, outside domination, and obsolete patterns of socio-economic organization—but a violent revolutionary reaction in the direction of extreme self-assertion. In the free, unhindered advance towards Arab unity, as in dynamic Arab nationalism in general, lies the only hope for *moderate, orderly, and peaceful* progress towards the attainment of the human aspirations of the Arab peoples for the exercise of their God-given rights to liberty, solidarity, and a more abundant life.

CONCLUSION

PROSPECTS OF ARAB UNITY IN THE FUTURE

OURS has been an inquiry into the origins and evolution of Arab unity, as an idea as well as a concrete historical process, not an exercise in prognostication. It is not our intention, therefore, to attempt, at this concluding stage, to predict the future course of events.

Nevertheless, our study of the recent past has revealed certain basic principles and trends which have had direct bearing upon the growth of Arab society in the preceding decades and which, to that extent, may have some significance for the appraisal of the prospects of Arab unity in the future.

* * *

Foremost among the conclusions which may be derived from our survey is the assertion that *the idea of Arab unity is a primary fact of political life in the Arab World today*. This idea has

been gaining popular appeal and practical efficacy since the end of the First World War; and it has become in recent years one of the most compelling political forces in Arab life. No account of Arab existence today can be adequate unless it acknowledges the fact and the efficaciousness of the desire of the Arab peoples for political unity; no appraisal of the future of the Arab World can be sound unless it takes cognizance of the sway of the idea of Arab unity over the Arab mind.

Just as important as the awareness of the *existence* and the *potency* of the idea of Arab unity, is the recognition of its *essential import*. *The Arab desire for unity is fundamentally a longing for normality, a determination to achieve a legitimate national right, a yearning for political health, and a desire for sounder economy and for greater stability and security in the Arab World.* Like the Arab ideas of independence and social-economic progress (which, jointly with the idea of unity, comprise the general concept of Arab nationalism), the idea of Arab unity reflects the awakeness of Arab society, after a long period of slumber, fragmentation, and foreign domination; it echoes the Arab urge to catch up with the more advanced nations of the contemporary world. Neither the idea of unity, therefore, nor the cognate ideas of self-determination and self-betterment, betoken hostility towards other peoples or embody menace to other nations or to the world at large.

* * *

The second conclusion which may be derived from our survey is a counterpart of the first.

Not only has the idea of Arab unity become a forceful psychological-political reality, but the actual accomplishment of political unity has been progressing steadily in recent decades.

Fragmentation of the Arab World by foreign Powers,¹ begun at the opening of the Nineteenth Century, reached its climax in

¹ See *above*, Chapter III.

the aftermath of the First World War in the early 1920's. The Arab determination to reverse the process of dismemberment by a counter-process of reunification was born immediately thereafter.² It was not until the mid-1930's, however, that the first fruits of this determination manifested themselves: Several bilateral treaties of friendship were concluded by the then-independent or semi-independent Arab states.³ In the early 1940's, more serious efforts to coordinate the policies and actions of the then-sovereign Arab states were exerted. They culminated in the creation of the League of Arab States in 1945.⁴ Under the auspices of the League, a dozen multilateral treaties and agreements were concluded between the Arab states, from 1945 to 1955.⁵ But the desire for *unity*, beyond the mere *coordination* of policies of sovereign states, remained unsatisfied. When the proposals submitted by individual countries between 1951 and 1954 for unifying the Arab states within the framework of the League failed to receive encouraging response, and when the more moderate attempt to establish Arab systems of joint defense and joint economic development finally collapsed in 1955, Arab nationalists decided to proceed towards unification independently of the League.⁶ Accordingly, from 1955 to 1957, Egypt and Syria made a phased advance towards political unity via *functional* unification: military, economic, and cultural.⁷ By the late months of 1957, the stage had been set for political unity between these two countries. This political unity was accomplished in February, 1958, when the United Arab Republic was founded.⁸ Within five weeks, Yemen federated with the United Arab Republic in the United Arab States; and, in the meantime, the two Hashemite Kingdoms of Iraq and Jordan had formed

2 See *above*, Chapters IV and V.

3 See *above*, Chapter IX, Section 1.

4 See *above*, Chapter IX, Sections 3-7.

5 See *above*, Chapter IX, Section 8.

6 See *above*, Chapter X.

7 See *above*, Chapter XII, Section 2.

8 See *above*, Chapter XII, Sections 4-6.

the Arab Union.⁹ Five Arab states have thus voluntarily doffed their state-sovereignty and transcended their separate statehood within structures of Arab unity. The Arab states of North Africa are preparing to do the same.¹⁰

This steady progress towards concrete political unity reveals the efficaciousness of the idea of Arab unity in the life and evolution of the Arab World.

Observers who are more impressed by the faltering or hesitancy of Arab officialdom, or by temporary setbacks, than by the general progress towards Arab unity, virtually permit downward bends in the graph to conceal its over-all upward direction.

* * *

The *actual attainment* of unity, however, has been so far less far-reaching than the *idea* of Arab unity. Our third conclusion, therefore, is that *the idea of Arab unity will remain live and active until political unity has been accomplished throughout the Arab World*; and that *the Arab national movement will continue to be "on the move" until all Arab lands have been brought together within a unified political system*.

The *partial success* achieved so far by the idea of Arab unity, rather than *satisfying* Arab nationalists, will in fact serve to *spur* them into further action towards the complete embodiment of that idea in Arab life.

What *form* the complete unification of the Arab World will assume; what *procedure* will be followed by the Arab national movement; what precise *steps* will be taken, in what *order*, and in accordance with what *time-table*—we do not presume to predict. Nor does our ideo-historical survey enable us to formulate answers to these questions.

Nevertheless, in addition to pointing to the *inevitability* of the continued march of the Arab World towards greater polit-

⁹ See *above*, Chapter XIII, Sections 1 and 2.

¹⁰ See *above*, Chapter XIII, Section 3.

ical unity, our survey also reveals certain fundamental principles pertaining to the *dynamics of unification*. These principles define the conditions under which the advance towards pan-Arab unity may be accelerated or retarded. Of these principles, the most significant are four, which we shall now proceed to enunciate.

* * *

(1) *Whenever foreign influence over Arab destiny has asserted itself, the result has been Arab political dismemberment: obversely, whenever Arab unification has been accomplished, it has been by Arab will, upon the initiative and at the hands of the Arabs themselves.*

From the turn of the Nineteenth Century until today, every act of political division in Arab society has been perpetrated by foreign Powers,¹¹ and every act of political reintegration and reunification of Arab territories has been achieved by the Arabs themselves.¹² For example: the unification of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Libya, and Morocco, to which we alluded in Chapter XIV, as well as the three unions erected in 1958, were achieved by Arab leadership; whereas every act of dismemberment suffered by Arab society, since the beginning of the Arab awakening, has been perpetrated by one foreign Power or another, or by a group of foreign Powers.

¹¹ See *above*, Chapter III.

¹² There has been no exception to this rule in modern Arab history. The only apparent exception, in fact, confirms the rule. Reference is here made to the territorial aggrandizement of Lebanon in 1920 by France, through the addition of four Syrian districts to the former district of Lebanon and the formation of Greater Lebanon. While this French action may seem to have accomplished unification, as far as Greater Lebanon was concerned, it simultaneously perpetrated the truncation of the interior state of Syria. The French action was in fact designed to enable Lebanon to survive detachment from its Syrian motherland, and to endow Lebanon with viability. *Integration* within Lebanon, thus, was calculated to make possible and to perpetuate the *detachment* of enlarged Lebanon from Syria; *seeming unification was a means to fragmentation.*

It follows, therefore that future *Arab progress in the direction of self-determination is likely to engender commensurate progress towards unification, just as, in the past decades, foreign domination has been directly proportional to Arab fragmentation, and Arab emancipation has been conducive to re-integration.* (The freedom of Algeria, for example, will certainly expedite the formation of the projected North African Federation.)

* * *

(2) *Whenever the will of the people has asserted itself in an Arab country, progress towards Arab unity has been enhanced.* To the extent to which Arab governmental regimes have been responsive to, or animated by, the desires paramount in the heart of the people, to that extent they have labored earnestly for unity.¹³ Conversely, to the degree to which the vested interests, ambitions, or traditional animosities of Arab dynasties or ruling cliques have asserted themselves, to that degree they have permitted disruptive interests and centrifugal forces to frustrate the popular urge for unity.¹⁴

Future progress towards Arab unity, therefore, is likely to be commensurate not only with the progress of the Arab states towards emancipation from foreign influence, but also with the progress of Arab governments towards greater responsiveness to the interests and desires of their peoples.

* * *

(3) *It follows from these two principles that the progress of the Arab World towards political unification is certain to be directly proportional to the triumph of the "dynamic" brand of nationalism over the "static" type of thinking currently predominant in official circles of many Arab states. The prospects*

¹³ See above, Chapter XII.

¹⁴ See above, Chapters VIII, IX and X.

of Arab unity are, therefore, a function of the prospects of "dynamic nationalism" in Arab society at large.¹⁵

Until "dynamic nationalism" comes to animate all Arab governments—and until it consequently succeeds, first, in bridging the gulf which currently separates public opinion from officialdom in many an Arab state; secondly, in rendering homogeneous and consonant the outlooks of all Arab governments on the three fundamental issues of domestic socio-economic-political organization, intra-Arab relations, and foreign policy; and, thirdly, in imbuing official thinking throughout the Arab World with the active desire for Arab unity—inter-governmental frictions and dissensions will be certain to continue to mark the Arab situation, and the attainment of complete political unity in the Arab World will be proportionately delayed.

Unrest and civil strife within Arab countries, and perhaps antagonisms between Arab governments as well, may be in store for the Arab World, before "dynamic nationalism" finally triumphs in all Arab lands and pan-Arab unity is at last accomplished.

In the fierce contest between the forces of "dynamic" and "static" nationalism in the Arab World, what is involved is nothing less than the place of the human person in Arab society, the destiny of the Arab community and its role in the world, and the enthronement in the organization of the Arab nation of the principles of justice, liberty, and equality in dignity and in opportunity. *The issues at stake are too grave and too vital to permit of complacent compromises or to submit to an indefinite, if uneasy, stalemate.* The popular clamor for reform grows daily, gaining in intensity and insistence; the clinging of the *anciens régimes* to inherited privileges also assumes an increasingly adamant character every day. Unless the popular dedication to the ideals of a healthier national life is blighted by oppression, frustrated by effective suppression, or diluted by appeasement; or unless the *ancien régime*, resigning itself to the inevitable, decides to embark upon a process of gradual surrender of privilege

¹⁵ See above, Chapter XI.

in order to avert total collapse—turbulence will be, for years to come, the fate of those Arab countries where “static” nationalism is still supreme.

Officialdom, the quasi-feudal aristocracy, courtiers, and the beneficiaries of the *status quo* in general have already been awakened into defensiveness, and have risen to protect the *status quo* which is at once the source of their power and the condition for their continued ascendancy.

The *ancien régime* has been actively struggling for survival in many Arab countries since 1952. The triumph of the new forces of the younger generation and of the groups bent on drastic reform, therefore, may not be accomplished without bitter struggle and great cost. The abortive popular insurrection in Jordan in the spring of 1957, and the civil war in Lebanon in the spring and summer of 1958, are but the beginnings of violent strife between peoples determined to assert themselves as the ultimate source of authority, and systems of privilege determined to protect their sway and ascendancy.

Domestic upheavals in some Arab countries, and, as a result, intensified frictions between “dynamic” and “static” Arab governments, may be the price which Arab society may find itself compelled to pay in the years immediately ahead, in order that creative harmony, reform and political unity may be made possible in the long-range future.

The road to ultimate Arab unity may well be: exacerbated disunity!

* * *

(4) *Finally: The prospects for unity within the Arab World are to some extent proportional to the degree of favorable or unfavorable intervention which may be forthcoming from without.* For the Arab World does not exist within an international vacuum. Powers, great and not-so-great, may seek to influence the course of events in the Arab World.

Some Powers may base their policies on the imagined unde-

sirability, from their own standpoints, of the fulfillment of the Arab longing for unity.

They may accordingly seek to impede the advance of the Arab World towards unification by diverse forms of *direct, active intervention*.

Or they may endeavor to achieve the same goal *indirectly*, by aiding and abetting current state-separateness: through encouraging governmental isolationism, or through buttressing the precariously-perched *anciens régimes*.

As a result of such possible attitudes on the part of some foreign Powers, the march of the Arab peoples towards pan-Arab unity may indeed be slowed down, hindered, or even momentarily halted. Conceivably, setbacks may be induced.

But, in the end, neither the steady growth of the Arab states towards self-determination, nor the manifest progress of the peoples towards decisive ascendancy in Arab society, can be indefinitely obstructed—whether by domestic suppression or by direct or indirect foreign intervention in support of the Arab *anciens régimes*.

In the final analysis, the decision of a given foreign Power to exploit and widen existing intra-Arab cleavages, to furnish aid and comfort to the static elements of Arab society, to bolster the *anciens régimes*, and to block the path of the nascent Arab forces marching towards independence, reform, and unity, is certain to rebound to the detriment of that foreign Power, harming instead of serving its long-range interests in the Arab World. For the days of the quasi-feudal system, of the oligarchy anchored in inherited privilege and the aristocracy based on excessive land-ownership, and of unrestrained monarchy are numbered; and nothing that an outside Power does or fails to do can permanently protect such institutions against the rising tide of the younger, educated, reform-craving generation.

To choose to buttress the collapsing *ancien régime* is virtually to choose to ally oneself with the forces of yesterday in an effort to impede the advance of the forces of tomorrow.

APPENDICES

OFFICIAL

DOCUMENTS

- A. Joint Egyptian-Syrian Proclamation of the Founding of the UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC.
- B. Seventeen-Point Program of Transition Towards the UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC.
- C. Provisional Constitution of the UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC.
- D. Charter of the UNITED ARAB STATES.
- E. ARAB UNION Agreement between the Kingdom of Iraq and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.
- F. Constitution of the ARAB UNION.
- G. NORTH AFRICAN UNITY: Resolution Adopted by the Tangier Conference for the Unification of the Arab Maghrib.

APPENDIX A

JOINT EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN PROCLAMATION OF THE FOUNDING OF THE UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC

NOTE: This Joint Proclamation was made by the Presidents of the former Republics of Egypt and Syria in Cairo on February 1, 1958.

The full text of this Proclamation may be found in *Basic Documents of the Arab Unifications*, published by the Arab Information Center, New York, 1958 (Documents Collections No. 2), pp. 5-6.

ON February 1, 1958, in a historic session held at Kubbah Palace in Cairo, His Excellency President Shukry El-Kuwatly of Syria, and President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, met the representatives of the Republics of Syria and Egypt. . . .

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the final measures to be taken for the realization of the Arab peoples' will, and the execution of what the Constitutions of both Republics stipulate, namely that the people of each of them forms a part of the Arab Nation. They, therefore, discussed the decisions unanimously approved by

the National Assembly of Egypt and the Syrian House of Representatives, that unity be established between the two countries as a preliminary step towards the realization of complete Arab unity. They also discussed the clear signs manifest in the past few years, that Arab nationalism was the inspiring spirit that dominated the history of Arabs in all their different countries, their common present and the hoped-for future of every Arab.

They came to the conclusion that this unity which is the fruit of Arab nationalism is the Arabs' path to sovereignty and freedom; that it is one of humanity's gateways to peace and co-operation; and that it is therefore their duty to take this unity, with persistence and with determination staunch and unwavering, out of the circle of wishes and aspirations to where it can be converted into a reality. They came out of this with the conviction that the elements conducive to the success of the union of the two Republics were abundant, particularly recently after their joint struggle—which had brought them even closer to one another—made the meaning of nationalism considerably clearer, stressed the fact that it was a movement for liberation and rehabilitation and that it was a faith in peace and co-operation.

For all this, the participants declare their total agreement, complete faith and deeply rooted confidence in the necessity of uniting Egypt and Syria into one state to be named "The United Arab Republic."

They have likewise decided to declare their unanimous agreement on the adoption of a presidential democratic system of government for the Arab Republic. The executive authority shall be vested in the head of the state assisted by the ministers appointed by him and responsible to him.

The legislative authority shall be vested in one legislative house. The new Republic shall have one flag, one army, one people who shall remain joined in a unity where all will share equal rights and duties, where all will call for the protection of their country with heart and soul and compete in the consolidation of its integrity and the insurance of its invulnerability.

His Excellency President Shukry El-Kuwatly and President Gamal Abdel Nasser will each deliver a statement to the people in the Syrian and the Egyptian Parliaments respectively on Wednesday,

February 5, 1958 in which they will announce the decisions reached in this meeting and explain the principles of the unity on which this rising young Republic shall stand.

The peoples of Egypt and Syria shall be called upon to participate in a general plebiscite on the principles of this unity and the choice of the head of the state within thirty days.

In proclaiming these decisions, the participants feel great pride and overwhelming joy in having assisted in taking this positive step on the road to Arab unity and solidarity—a unity which had been for many an epoch and many a generation the Arabs' much cherished hope and greatly coveted objective. In deciding on the unity of both peoples, the participants declare that their unity aims at the unification of all the Arab peoples and affirm that the door is open for participation to any Arab state desirous of joining them in a union or federation for the purpose of protecting the Arab peoples from harm and evil, strengthening Arab sovereignty, and safeguarding its existence.

May God protect this step we have taken and those which are to follow with His ever vigilant care and benevolence so that the Arab people under the banner of unity may live in dignity and peace.

APPENDIX B

SEVENTEEN-POINT PROGRAM OF TRANSITION TOWARDS THE UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC

NOTE: The following is an unofficial translation of the "principles upon which the United Arab Republic is to stand during the period of transition," as announced by the Presidents of the former Republics of Egypt and Syria before the respective legislatures of those states on February 5, 1958.

The text of this unofficial translation is contained in a Press Release issued by the Press Bureau of the former Egyptian Mission to the United Nations, New York, on February 6, 1958.

- I. The United Arab Republic is a democratic, independent, sovereign republic. Its peoples are part of the Arab nation.
- II. Liberties are safeguarded within the limits of the law.
- III. General suffrage is the right of all citizens as prescribed by the law. Their participation in public life is a civic obligation.
- IV. The legislative authority is vested in a house to be called the National Assembly. Members of the house are to be specified and appointed by decree from the President of the

republic. Half of the members of the house at least must be appointed from the members of the Syrian House of Representatives and the Egyptian National Assembly.

- V. The executive authority is vested in the President of the Republic.
- VI. Private property is safeguarded, while its social function is organized by the law. Confiscation of property is only allowed for the public good in return for adequate indemnification according to the law.
- VII. Taxes are to be levied, modified or cancelled only by law. None can be exempted from payment except in cases cited in the law.
- VIII. The judiciary is independent with no power over it save that of the law.
- IX. All questions decided by laws in force in Syria and Egypt remain valid within the districts prescribed for them on their issuance.
- X. The United Republic consists of two regions, Syria and Egypt.
- XI. An executive council will be set up in each region directed by a chairman, appointed by presidential decree, assisted by ministers appointed by the President at the recommendation of the chairman.
- XII. The authorities of the Executive Council are defined by Presidential decrees.
- XIII. All international treaties and agreements concluded by Syria and Egypt respectively with other countries remain valid within the regional limits prescribed on their conclusion and in accordance with the principles of international law.
- XIV. Public services and administrative systems existing at the time of application of this system remain valid in both Syria and Egypt till their reorganization and unification by Presidential decrees.
- XV. Citizens are to form a National Union which should aim at realizing national goals and to stimulate the efforts made to build the nation on sound political, social and economic bases. Methods to be followed by the Union are defined by Presidential decree.

- XVI. Measures shall be taken to draw up a permanent Constitution for the United Arab Republic.
- XVII. A plebiscite over the union and the choice of the President of the United Arab Republic shall take place on February 21, 1958.

APPENDIX C

PROVISIONAL CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC

NOTE: This Provisional Constitution was issued on March 5, 1958.

The full text of this Provisional Constitution may be found in *Basic Documents of the Arab Unifications*, published by the Arab Information Center, New York, 1958 (Documents Collections No. 2), pp. 10-20.

PART I THE UNITED ARAB STATE

- I. The United Arab State is a democratic, independent, sovereign Republic, and its people are part of the Arab Nation.
- II. Nationality in the United Arab Republic is defined by Law. Nationality in the United Arab Republic is enjoyed by all bearers of the Syrian or Egyptian nationalities; or who are entitled to it by laws or statutes in force in Syria or Egypt at the time this Constitution takes effect.

PART II

BASIC CONSTITUENTS OF SOCIETY

- III. Social solidarity is the basis of Society.
- IV. National economy is organized according to plans which conform to the principles of social justice, and aim at the development of national productivity and the raising of the standard of living.
- V. Private property is inviolable. The law organizes its social function. Property may not be expropriated except for purposes of public utility and in consideration of just compensation in accordance with the Law.
- VI. Social justice is the basis of taxation and public imposts.

PART III

PUBLIC RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

- VII. All citizens are equal before the Law. They are equal in their rights and obligations, without distinction of race, origin, language, religion or creed.
- VIII. No infraction and no punishment may be imposed except by virtue of the Law. Penalties may not be inflicted except in respect of offenses committed subsequently to the date of the Law prescribing them.
- IX. The extradition of political refugees is prohibited.
- X. Public liberties are guaranteed within the limits of the Law.
- XI. Defense of the Fatherland is a sacred duty, and the fulfillment of military service is an honour for all citizens. Conscription is obligatory in accordance with the Law.

PART IV

THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

CHAPTER I

Head of the State

- XII. The President of the Republic is the Head of State. He exercises his powers in the manner prescribed by this Constitution.

CHAPTER II

The Legislature

- XIII. The legislative power is vested in an Assembly named the National Assembly. Number of the members of the National Assembly and their choice are determined by Presidential Decree. At least half of the number of members must be members of the Syrian Chamber of Deputies and the National Assembly of Egypt.
- XIV. The National Assembly exercises control over the acts of the Executive in the manner prescribed by the present Constitution.
- XV. To be a member of the Assembly, a person must not be less than thirty years of age according to the Gregorian Calendar.
- XVI. The National Assembly has its seat in Cairo. It may be convened elsewhere upon the demand of the President of the Republic.
- XVII. The President of the Republic convokes the Assembly and declares the closure of its session.
- XVIII. Meetings of the National Assembly, without summons and outside its sessions, are null and void, and decisions taken therein are null and void, according to the Law.
- XIX. Before admission to the exercise of their functions members of the Assembly shall take the following oath before the Assembly in public session:

“I swear in the name of Almighty God to preserve faithfully the United Arab Republic and its Regime, to watch over the interests of the People and integrity of the Fatherland, and to respect the Constitution and the Law.”
- XX. The Assembly shall elect a President and two Vice-Presidents at the first ordinary meeting.
- XXI. Meetings of the Assembly are public. Nevertheless, the Assembly can meet in camera following the demand of the President of the Republic or twenty of its members. The Assembly decides thereafter whether the discussion of the question under consideration should or should not be resumed in public.

- XXII. No law may be enacted unless approved by the Assembly. No draft law may be adopted unless a vote is taken on each of its articles separately.
- XXIII. The Assembly draws up its own internal regulations determining the manner in which it exercises its powers.
- XXIV. Every member of the National Assembly is entitled to address to the Ministers questions or interpellations. Interpellations may not be discussed until after at least seven days from the date of their presentation, except in the case of urgency and with the consent of the Minister concerned.
- XXV. Any twenty members of the National Assembly may ask for the discussion of a general question with a view to ascertaining the Government's policy and exchanging views on such a question.
- XXVI. The National Assembly may express its wishes and proposals to the Government regarding general questions.
- XXVII. No impost may be established, modified or abolished except by a law. No one may be exempted therefrom except in the cases specified by the Law.

No other tax or duty may be exacted except within the limits defined by the Law.
- XXVIII. The Law defines the basic rules of the collection of public revenues and the manner of their expenditure.
- XXIX. The Government may not contract any loans, nor undertake any project which would be a burden on the State Treasury over one or more future years, except with the consent of the National Assembly.
- XXX. No monopoly may be granted except by Law and for a limited duration.
- XXXI. The Law prescribes the manner of the preparation of the Budget, and its presentation to the National Assembly.
- XXXII. The draft of the State's General Budget must be submitted to the National Assembly for its examination and approval at least three months before the end of

the financial year. Each section of the Budget must be voted separately.

The National Assembly may not introduce any amendments to the draft Budget except with the approval of the Government.

XXXIII. Every transfer of funds from one section of the Budget to another must be approved by the National Assembly, as well as any expenditure for which no provision is made therein or exceeding the budgetary allocations.

XXXIV. The provisions relating to the Budget of the State are applicable to independent or annexed budgets.

XXXV. The Law determines the rules regarding the budgets of other public institutions.

XXXVI. No member of the National Assembly may, during the session, be subject to a criminal prosecution without the permission of the Assembly, except in cases of *flagrante delicto*.

The Assembly must be given notification in any case where prosecution is undertaken while the Assembly is in recess.

XXXVII. No member of the National Assembly may be deprived of his mandate except by a decision of a two-thirds majority of the Assembly, upon a proposal of twenty of its members, and this on the ground of loss of confidence and esteem.

XXXVIII. The President of the Republic has the right to dissolve the National Assembly. In this case, a new Assembly must be formed and convoked within a period of sixty days from its dissolution.

XXXIX. When the National Assembly declares a vote of no confidence in a Minister, he must resign.

A motion of censure concerning a Minister may not be submitted to the Assembly until after an interpellation has been addressed to him. Such a motion must be proposed by twenty members of the Assembly. No decision may be taken before at least three days from the date of the presentation of the motion.

Withdrawal of confidence must be pronounced by the majority of the members of the Assembly.

- XL. No one may at the same time be a member of the National Assembly and incumbent of a public function. The Law determines the other cases of incompatibility of functions.
- XLI. No member of the National Assembly may be appointed to the board of a company during the period of his mandate except in the cases prescribed by the Law.
- XLII. No member of the National Assembly may, during the period of his mandate, acquire or take or lease any State property, or lease, sell or exchange to or with the State any part of his property whatsoever.
- XLIII. Members of the National Assembly receive a remuneration prescribed by the Law.

CHAPTER III

The Executive

- XLIV. The Executive Power is vested in the President of the Republic, and he exercises it in the manner prescribed by the Constitution.
- XLV. The President of the Republic may not, during his term of office, exercise a liberal profession or undertake any commercial, financial or industrial activity. Nor may he acquire or take or lease any property belonging to the State, or lease, sell or exchange to or with the State any part of his property whatsoever.
- XLVI. The President of the Republic may appoint one or more Vice-Presidents, and he may relieve them of their posts.
- XLVII. The President of the Republic appoints the Ministers and discharges them from their functions. Ministers of State and Secretaries of State may be appointed. Each Minister supervises the affairs of his Department and executes the general policy drawn by the President of the Republic.
- XLVIII. The Vice-President, or the Minister, may not, during

his tenure of office, exercise a liberal profession, engage in commercial, financial or industrial activities, nor may he acquire or take or lease any property belonging to the State, or lease, sell or exchange any part whatsoever of his own property to or with the State.

XLIX. The President of the Republic and the National Assembly have the right to bring a Minister to justice for infractions committed by him in the exercise of his functions. The indictment of a Minister by the National Assembly is effected by a proposal submitted by at least one-fifth of the members of the Assembly. Such indictment must be approved by a majority of two-thirds of the members of the Assembly.

L. The President of the Republic has the right to initiate laws, to oppose and to promulgate them.

LI. If the President of the Republic opposes a draft law, it is sent back to the National Assembly within the thirty days following the date of its communication to him.

If it is not referred back to the Assembly within this period, it is considered law and promulgated.

LII. If a draft law is referred back to the Assembly within the prescribed time, and is voted a second time by a majority of two-thirds of its members, it is considered law and promulgated.

LIII. While the National Assembly is in recess, the President of the Republic may enact decrees having the force of law, or take decisions originally lying within the competence of the Assembly, should the necessity arise. Such decrees and decisions must be submitted to the National Assembly at its first meeting. If, however, the Assembly opposes them by a two-thirds majority, they are no longer effective from the day of their opposition.

LIV. The President of the Republic enacts the regulations necessary for the organization of the public service departments and supervises the administration thereof.

LV. The President of the Republic is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

LVI. The President of the Republic concludes treaties and

communicates them to the National Assembly. Such treaties will have the force of law after their conclusion, their ratification and their publication in conformity with the rules in force.

However, peace treaties, treaties of alliance, commercial and navigational treaties as well as all treaties entailing territorial changes or affecting the rights of sovereignty, or those involving expenditure by the Public Treasury for which no provision is made in the Budget, will not become effective until after ratification by the National Assembly.

- LVII. The President of the Republic may declare a state of emergency.
- LVIII. The United Arab Republic consists of two regions: Egypt and Syria. In each, there shall be an Executive Council appointed by Presidential Decree. This Executive Council has the competence to examine and study matters pertaining to the execution of the general policy in the region.

CHAPTER IV

The Judicature

- LIX. Judges are independent. They are, in the administration of Justice, subject to no other authority save that of the Law. No power in the State may interfere in lawsuits or in the affairs of justice.
- LX. Judges are irrelievable, in the manner prescribed by Law.
- LXI. The Law organises the various jurisdictions and determines their attributions.
- LXII. Sessions of the Courts are conducted in public, unless a court decides, in the interests of public order or morality, to sit in camera.
- LXIII. Judicial decisions are pronounced and executed in the name of the Nation.

PART V

GENERAL RULES

- LXIV. Cairo is the capital of the United Arab Republic.
- LXV. The Law determines the national flag and the regulations relative thereto.
- The Law also determines the State emblem and the regulations relative thereto.
- LXVI. The Law only legislates post-operatively; it has no retroactive effect. Nevertheless, provisions to the contrary may be stipulated in a law, except in criminal matters, with the approval of the majority of the members of the National Assembly.
- LXVII. Laws are published in the Official Gazette within two weeks from the date of their promulgation, and come into force ten days thereafter. Nevertheless, this time may be extended or curtailed by a special provision in the Law.

PART VI

INTERIM AND FINAL RULES

- LXVIII. All laws, decrees and regulations in force in each of the two regions of Egypt and Syria at the time this Constitution comes into effect shall remain valid within the regional spheres for which they were intended. These laws, decrees and regulations may, however, be abrogated or amended according to the procedure established in the present Constitution.
- LXIX. The coming into effect of the present Constitution shall not infringe upon the provisions and clauses of the international treaties and agreements concluded between each of Syria and Egypt and foreign Powers.
- These treaties and agreements shall remain valid in the regional spheres for which they were intended at the time of their conclusion, according to the rules and regulations of International Law.

- LXX. A special budget, alongside the State Budget, shall be drawn up and put into force in the present regional sphere of each of Syria and Egypt until the coming into effect of the final measures for the introduction of a single Budget.
- LXXI. The public services and administrative systems existing at the time the present Constitution comes into effect shall remain in force in each of Syria and Egypt until their reorganisation and unification by Presidential Decree.
- LXXII. Citizens shall constitute a National Union to work for the realization of national aims and the intensification of the efforts for raising a sound national structure, from the political, social and economic viewpoints. The manner in which such a union is to be formed shall be defined by Presidential Decree.
- LXXIII. The present Provisional Constitution shall be in force until the announcement of the people's approval of the final Constitution of the United Arab Republic.

APPENDIX D

CHARTER OF THE UNITED ARAB STATES

NOTE: The following is an unofficial translation of the Charter of the United Arab States, signed by the President of the United Arab Republic and the Crown Prince of Yemen on March 8, 1958. This text may be found in *Arab News and Views* (published by the Arab Information Center, New York), Vol. IV, No. 5, dated March 20, 1958.

PART I. THE UNION

- I. A union named the United Arab States (U.A.S.) has been hereby created. It includes the United Arab Republic, the Kingdom of Yemen, and those Arab states which will agree to join the Union.
- II. Each state will preserve its international personality and its system of government.
- III. Citizens of the Union are equal in public rights and obligations.
- IV. Each citizen in the Union has the right to work and occupy public office in the united countries without discrimination and within the limits prescribed by law.
- V. Freedom of movement in the Union is guaranteed within the limits prescribed by law.

- VI. Member states shall pursue a unified foreign policy drawn up by the Union.
- VII. Diplomatic and consular representation of the Union abroad shall be assumed by a single mission in those cases specified by the Union.
- VIII. The Union shall have unified armed forces.
- IX. Economic affairs in the Union are organized according to plans aimed at the development of production, the exploitation of natural resources, and the coordination of economic activities.
- X. Currency affairs in the Union shall be determined by law.
- XI. A customs union shall be established between the united countries. It will be governed by conditions and regulations prescribed by law.
- XII. The law organizes the stages and means of coordination of education and culture in the Union.

PART II. AUTHORITIES

- XIII. Control of Union affairs shall be assumed by a council named "The Supreme Council." It shall be composed of heads of member states.
- XIV. The Supreme Council shall be assisted in its functions by a council named "Union Council."
- XV. The Union Council shall include an equal number of representatives from member states. The number of members, duration of membership, and regulations to which they are subject shall be defined by law.
- XVI. The Presidency of the Union Council shall be assumed alternatively by each member state for a period of one year. The state which is to assume the Presidency of the Council shall appoint a president, who shall have one or more vice-presidents from a member state or states.
- XVII. The Supreme Council defines the higher policy of the Union with regard to political, defense, economic, and cultural matters. It enacts laws necessary to this effect. It is the supreme authority to which determination of at-

- tributes shall be referred. Decisions of the Council shall be by unanimous approval.
- XVIII. The Supreme Council shall enact Union laws falling within its competence in accordance with this Charter after agreement by the competent authorities in each state.
- XIX. The Supreme Council appoints a commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces of the Union.
- XX. The general budget of the Union shall be issued by decree of the Supreme Council. Law shall determine its resources and the contribution of each member state.
- XXI. The Union Council is the permanent authority of the Union. It shall assume the examination of political affairs and set down a unified yearly program which includes regulations and measures leading to achievement of union.
- XXII. Decisions and the yearly program elaborated by the Union Council are to be submitted to the Supreme Council for ratification. It will pass on decisions taken by the Union Council which have been the subject of opposition from one of the two states or more.
- XXIII. The following bodies are attached to the Union Council:
- A. Defense Council
 - B. Economic Council
 - C. Cultural Council
- Decisions taken by these bodies shall be submitted to the Union Council for ratification.
- XXIV. The Law defines the manner of formation of these bodies attached to the Union Council and their attributes.

PART III. GENERAL AND INTERIM RULES

- XXV. A decree shall be issued by the Supreme Council determining the permanent seat of the United Arab States, its limits and the city in which the Union Council and bodies attached to it shall hold meetings by rotation.

- XXVI. The law determines the rules to be applied to the region of the permanent seat of the Union.
- XXVII. Union laws shall have full force in united countries. They come into effect 15 days after publication in the Official Gazette of the Union unless otherwise specified by law.
- XXVIII. The head of each state shall appoint a minister to the United Arab States to supervise the enforcement of the Union's decisions with respect to the region to which he belongs.
- XXIX. The head of each state shall appoint a minister to represent him before the head or heads of other states. This minister shall serve in the same capacity as local ministers.
- XXX. Diplomatic representation between member states of the Union shall be abolished.
- XXXI. Customs regulations observed in each member state shall remain in effect until the establishment of a customs union between them. Meanwhile, law may prescribe a special customs system to be observed by all member states.
- XXXII. The present Charter shall come into effect upon the day of its approval, pending the establishment of a permanent system for the Union.

APPENDIX E

ARAB UNION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE KINGDOM OF IRAQ AND THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

NOTE: The following is an unofficial translation of the Agreement concluded between the Kings of Iraq and Jordan on February 14, 1958.

This text may be found in *Arab News and Views* (published by the Arab Information Center, New York), Vol. IV, No. 4, dated March 5, 1958.

PREAMBLE

Whereas: the great Arab Revolt led by His Majesty the great savior Al Hussein Ibn Ali was a proclamation of a new dawn for the Arab nation advanced by the sacrifices of martyrs for the liberation of the Great Arab Nation and unification of its peoples; an attempt to regain the prestige of Arabs among the nations of the world; and a contribution to the progress of human civilization;

Whereas: the blessed revolution emanated from the surge of

Arabs toward liberty and unity based upon the glorious past of the Arab World, faith in itself and its old and eternal mission;

Whereas: the mission of the Arab Revolt, for which its leader has striven, passed to the sons and grandsons and was inherited by generation after generation to remain always as a flame illuminating the path of the Arab nation toward the realization of its hopes and aspirations for the complete unity which integrates all the elements leading to liberty, happiness and strength; the regaining of the glories and preservation of its heritage, and its sacred aims; and the assurance of a happy future under the auspices of this blessed unity;

Therefore: the two Hashemite states decide to form a federation between themselves based upon these sublime aims.

I

An Arab Federation is established on February 14, 1958 between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Kingdom of Iraq to be called the Arab Federation. This Federation is opened for the other Arab States which want to join it.

II

Each of the two States reserves its integral State entity, its sovereignty, and its existing government.

III

The international treaties, pacts and agreements which bound each of the two States before the establishment of the Federation will remain valid with respect to the State which concluded them, without binding the other State. But the international treaties, pacts and agreements which will be concluded after the establishment of the Federation and which will involve Federation matters will come under the authority and responsibility of the Federation government.

IV

Directly after the official declaration of the Federation, measures for complete unity between the two Federation States will be taken in the following areas:

- a) Unity in foreign policy and diplomatic representation;

- b) Unity of the Jordanian and Iraqi armies under the name, "Arab Army";
- c) Elimination of customs barriers between the two countries and unification of customs laws;
- d) Unification of educational curricula.

V

The two parties agree to carry out, as quickly as possible, the necessary measures for unifying the currency and coordinating the financial and economic policy of the two countries.

VI

Whenever necessity and interest require the unification of any other area, other than those mentioned in Article IV, the necessary measures will be undertaken according to the constitution of the Federation to put that area under the competence and authority of the Federation government.

VII

The Arab Revolt flag will be the flag of the Federation and the flag of each of the two States.

VIII

a) Federation affairs will be undertaken by a Federation government composed of a legislative council and an executive authority.

b) Each of the national Jordanian and Iraqi parliaments elects the members of the legislative council from among their members. Each State will have the same number of representatives.

c) The members of the executive authority will be appointed according to the regulations of the Federation constitution to carry out the affairs included under the authority of the Federation government.

IX

The King of Iraq will be the Head of the Federation government. In case of his absence for any reason the King of Jordan will be the Head of the Federation government. Each of the two Kings reserves his constitutional authority in his Kingdom. When another State

joins the Federation, the question of the Head of State will be reviewed according to conditions.

X

The federal capital will be Baghdad for six months and Amman for the other six months consecutively.

XI

a) The Federation government will prepare the Federation constitution according to the basis indicated in this Agreement; and the Constitution of each of the two States will be amended to the extent required, and within the limits expressed by the Federation constitution.

b) The necessary steps and measures required for the establishment of the Federation government and the enactment of a Federation Constitution will be carried out within a period not exceeding three months from the date of the signing of this agreement.

XII

This agreement is to be concluded according to the constitutional principles of each of the two States.

APPENDIX F

CONSTITUTION OF THE ARAB UNION

NOTE: This is an unofficial translation of the Constitution of the Arab Union. This text may be found in *Basic Documents of the Arab Unifications*, published by the Arab Information Center, New York, 1958 (Documents Collections, No. 2), pp. 26-43.

CHAPTER I GENERAL

- I. The Arab Union shall be formed of the Kingdom of Iraq and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Membership shall be open to any Arab state desiring to join, by agreement with the Union Government.
- II. With due regard for the provisions of this Constitution, each member-State of the Union will maintain its independent international status and its existing system of rule.
- III. International Treaties, Pacts and Agreements which a member-State has contracted prior to the creation of the Union, or prior to joining the Union, will continue to be binding on that State but not binding on the other member-States. All International Treaties, Pacts and

- Agreements concluded thereafter, will be negotiated under authority of the Union Government.
- IV. The Union Government shall be composed of a President of the Union, Legislative Authority, Executive Authority and Judicial Authority.
- V. a) The King of Iraq will be the President of the Union; in his absence the King of Jordan will be President of the Union. If both Kings are absent, the President of the Union with the agreement of the Union Council of Ministers will appoint a Deputy or a Regency Council to exercise the powers of the President during his absence; the President can specify the powers of the Deputy or the Regency Council.
- b) In the event other states should join the Union, the status of the President of the Union will be reconsidered in light of the circumstances prevailing at the time.
- VI. The headquarters of the Union Government will be rotated, six months in Baghdad and six months in Amman. Upon agreement between the Governments of the member-States, this arrangement may be changed and a permanent residence selected for the Union Government.
- VII. a) The flag of the Union shall be of the following description and measurements: Its length to be twice its width, horizontally divided into three equal and parallel stripes with the black on the top, then white and then green. On the side of the mast there will be a red equilateral triangle with a base equal to the width of the flag.
- b) The emblem of the Union, its insignia, medals and national anthem are to be fixed by special law.
- c) Each member-State will retain its local flag.
- VIII. All citizens of the countries of the Arab Union, regardless of race or faith and in accordance with current laws, will enjoy the freedoms and rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Every individual has the right to ownership and movement throughout the Union, the freedom to live and reside in any

part of the Union, to choose his profession, to practice any craft or trade, and to join educational institutions.

CHAPTER II

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

- IX. The Legislative Authority of the Union rests with Union Council and the President of the Union.
- X. a) The Union Council shall be formed of 40 members, twenty from Iraq and twenty from Jordan.
 - b) Each district of the two Kingdoms will be represented by at least one representative; these will be elected in accordance with the law.
 - c) The Kings of Jordan and Iraq will appoint the remaining number in accordance with preceding paragraph (a), provided that of these there are not less than five and not more than seven representatives.
 - d) Taking into consideration the numerical proportion as stated in paragraph (a) above, limitations on the total number of the Council and the manner of their selection may be reconsidered by law.
 - e) The first Union Council shall be formed by electing the members provided for in paragraph (b) by the House of Representatives of each State from among their own members. The remaining number are to be appointed in accordance with paragraph (c) above.
 - f) Representatives elected to membership in the Union Council in accordance with paragraph (e) above cannot retain their seats in the House of Representatives which elected them. They are to choose between the two memberships within eight days from the date they are elected.
 - g) It is not permissible to hold concurrently membership in the Union Council and in the National Assembly of either State. Any member elected to the Union Council must choose one of the two memberships within eight days from the date of his appointment or election.
- XI. a) It is not permissible to hold concurrently member-

ship in the Union Council and a public position, or employment with a person contracting to any of the public authorities in any of the States of the Union. Exempted from this rule are those renting Government lands or property. A public position is any position of which the holder receives a salary from the budget of any member-State of the Union.

b) Every Union Council member, before taking his seat in the Council, shall say the following oath before the Council: "I swear by God the Almighty to be faithful to the Arab Union, to protect the Constitution of the Union, and to carry out sincerely all assignments entrusted to me."

XII. The President shall convene and adjourn the Union Council in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.

XIII. a) The term of office of the Union Council is four Gregorian years. Each year is to have one ordinary session starting on the first Saturday of January. If that day happens to be an official holiday, it will start on the following day. If the Council is not convened on the appointed date, it will convene in accordance with the Constitution.

b) The President of the Union, on the strength of a Union decree published in the Official Gazette, can adjourn the Union Council twice, provided that the total period of these adjournments within any ordinary session does not exceed two months. These periods of adjournment will not be counted in determining the total period of the session.

XIV. a) The duration of the ordinary session will be four months. The President of the Union has the right to extend it when necessary.

b) The President of the Union is entitled to convene the Council in extraordinary session when necessary or upon request signed by the majority of Council members. The President of the Union can adjourn the extraordinary session. The Council has no right to discuss

in extraordinary session any subject except those subjects for which the session was convened.

- XV. The President of the Union will open the ordinary session of the Union Council by delivering a statement embodying the general policy of the Union. He may delegate the Prime Minister or one of the Ministers to supervise the opening ceremony and to deliver the statement. The Union Council will present its reply to the opening statement within a period not to exceed two weeks.
- XVI. a) At the beginning of each ordinary session the Union Council will elect a Speaker and two deputy Speakers. These may be re-elected.
b) If the Council convenes in an extraordinary session and has no Speaker, the Council will elect a Speaker to hold office until the next ordinary session.
- XVII. The meetings of the Council shall be public, but closed meetings may be held upon the request of a Cabinet Minister, the Speaker of the Union Council, or ten members.
- XVIII. The Speaker and members of the Union Council shall receive salaries specified by law.
- XIX. The Council will draft its own by-laws.
- XX. Any Council member may resign by presenting a letter to the Speaker. The Speaker is to put the resignation before the Council for acceptance or rejection.
- XXI. The meetings of the Council shall be legal if attended by two-thirds of the Council members. Resolutions of the Council shall be passed by a simple majority of attending members, except in cases when an absolute majority is required by law. The Speaker will vote only in case of a tie.
- XXII. a) Members of the Union Council will not be arrested or tried during the sessions of the Council unless the Council shall approve the action by absolute majority or unless a member is taken in the act of a crime. In the latter instance, the Council shall be notified when it meets again.

b) Members of the Council will not be held responsible for thoughts or statements made while carrying out duties in the Council.

XXIII. a) Any member of the Union Council losing qualification for membership in accordance with the laws of the State to which he belongs, will lose his membership in the Union Council. His place becomes vacant.

b) If the seat of any member of the Council becomes vacant before the end of his term of office for any reason, his place will be filled in accordance with the provisions of Article X of the Constitution.

XXIV. A new Union Council shall be elected three months before the end of the term of the existing Council. If an election is difficult to conduct at that time, the existing Council will be extended until the election of a new Council.

XXV. The Council will supervise the work of the Executive Power described in this Constitution.

XXVI. The Union Prime Minister or Minister who is a member of the Union Council has the right to speak and vote. Ministers who are not members of the Council have the right to speak but not to vote. Ministers, or those representing Ministers, have precedence over other members in addressing the Council. Only those representing Ministers and the Prime Minister are allowed to go into the meeting hall and to speak; others may be permitted to enter upon invitation of the Speaker.

XXVII. a) The President of the Union has the right to dissolve the Union Council.

b) If the Council is dissolved, a new one shall be elected immediately. In event a new Council is not elected for any reason, a Council is to be elected in the first meeting held by the National Assemblies of the member-States.

c) The new Council shall be called for extraordinary session within twenty days after its election. This session

shall not be delayed beyond the 31st day of December for any reason. The extraordinary session shall be adjourned on the above date so that the Council may hold its first ordinary session in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. If the extraordinary session is held in January or February, it shall be considered the first ordinary session.

d) If the Council is dissolved, the newly-elected Council shall not be dissolved for the same reason.

XXVIII. The Council has the right to carry out investigations in matters within its scope of authority and in accordance with its by-laws.

XXIX. The Union Council of Ministers shall present all draft laws to the Council. Except in financial matters, any ten members of the Union Council can propose laws.

XXX. a) Draft laws suggested by the Council of Ministers shall be given to the sub-committee concerned in the Council for opinion and presentation to the Council.

b) Draft laws submitted by Council members shall be submitted to the sub-committee concerned for review and discussion. After presentation to the Council and approval, laws will be presented to the Council of Ministers for consideration and be presented again to the Union Council either in the same session or in the following session. In the event a suggestion is rejected by the Union Council the same shall not be presented to the Council except in following sessions.

XXXI. The Union Council shall vote on a draft law article by article and then shall vote on it in its entirety. Upon agreement of the Council, a vote may be taken on the whole of the law without voting on it article by article.

XXXII. a) Draft laws approved by the Union Council shall be submitted to the President of the Union for final approval.

b) If the President of the Union does not approve a law, he shall return it to the Union Council within thirty days from the day it was presented to him to-

gether with his reasons for not approving it. If the law is not returned within that period, it will be considered approved.

c) If a law is returned to the Council and approved again by the Council by two-thirds majority, the law shall be submitted for a second time to the President. If the law is not returned to the Council within thirty days, it will be considered approved.

XXXIII. Laws shall be published in the Official Gazette within fifteen days of approval, and shall take effect after thirty days from publication, unless special provisions are mentioned in the same law regarding date of effect.

XXXIV. Each member of the Union Council has the right to address any question or inquiry to any Minister in accordance with Council by-laws and regulations.

CHAPTER III

EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY

XXXV. The Executive Authority shall rest with the President of the Union, who shall carry out his authority through the Union Council of Ministers in accordance with the Constitution.

XXXVI. The President of the Union is immune from liability and above responsibility.

XXXVII. The President of the Union shall issue decrees upon the suggestion of the Minister concerned. These decrees shall be signed by the Prime Minister and the Minister concerned, unless such decrees are related to the appointment or resignation of a Prime Minister. Orders concerning appointment or resignation of Ministers shall be signed by the President and the Prime Minister.

XXXVIII. The Union Council of Ministers shall consist of a Prime Minister and a number of Ministers. A Deputy Prime Minister and Ministers of State may be appointed so that the selection of Ministers will enable the member-States to take part in the Council of Ministers. Ministers

shall be the citizens of one of the member-States and shall have qualifications similar to those of the members of the National Assemblies of the member-States.

XXXIX. The Prime Minister and Ministers shall say the following oath in the presence of the President: "I swear by God the Almighty to be faithful to the Arab Union and to protect its Constitution and to fulfill honestly the assignments entrusted to me."

XL. a) The Council of Ministers shall be responsible for administration of the affairs of the Union within the limits of the powers outlined in this Constitution and in accordance with laws drawn up pursuant to the Constitution.

b) The resolutions of the Council of Ministers shall be presented to the President for perusal. He may request reconsideration of any resolution. The Prime Minister and Ministers will carry out these resolutions within the scope of their authority.

XLI. a) A Minister is responsible for the affairs of his Ministry and will carry out the general policy of the Union.

b) A Minister of State shall take charge of the affairs entrusted to him by the Prime Minister.

XLII. a) Membership in the Council of Ministers may be held concurrently with a seat in the Union Council. Concurrent membership in the Union Cabinet and in the Cabinet or the National Assembly of a member-State is not permissible.

b) Membership in the Cabinet may not be held concurrently with another public position. No Minister may buy or lease any property of the Union or properties of any of the States of the Union. No Minister, during tenure in the Cabinet, may be a member of the board of directors of any company, carry on commercial activity, receive a salary from an official or non-official institution, or engage in a profession.

XLIII. a) The President shall appoint the Prime Minister, dismiss him, and accept his resignation. He shall ap-

point, upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister, the Ministers; he shall dismiss them, and accept their resignations.

b) When the Prime Minister of the Cabinet resigns, is dismissed, or dies, all the Ministers will resign.

XLIV. The salaries of the Prime Minister and Ministers are to be fixed by law.

XLV. The Prime Minister and Ministers are jointly responsible before the Union Council for the general policy of the Union; every Minister is responsible for the activities of his Ministry.

XLVI. If the Union Council, by absolute majority of its members, votes a lack of confidence, the Cabinet must resign promptly. If the vote relates to one minister, he must resign.

XLVII. a) The meeting to vote confidence in the Cabinet or a Minister will convene either upon the request of the Prime Minister or a request signed by no less than ten members of the Union Council.

b) A vote of confidence in the Cabinet can be postponed once for a period of not more than seven days if the delay is requested by the Prime Minister or the Minister concerned. During this period, the Council must not be dissolved.

XLVIII. The Council of Ministers shall present its Ministerial Statement to the Union Council within one month of its appointment, if the Council is in session. A vote of confidence on the basis of the Statement shall be requested. If the Council is not in session, or has been dissolved, the Speech of Inauguration is to be considered a Ministerial Statement.

XLIX. The Ministers are responsible for crimes committed during performance of their duties.

L. a) The Union Council has the right to arraign Ministers. Ministers will be tried before the Union Supreme Court, a decision to arraign a Minister to be taken by secret ballot and by a two-thirds majority of the total membership of the Council.

- b) A Minister, arraigned by the Union Council, will be suspended from his post until the Supreme Court issues a verdict.
- LI. The President will appoint diplomatic representatives for the Government of the Union, will dismiss them, and accept their resignations as provided by law. He accepts the credentials of the diplomatic representatives of foreign States.
- LII. The President concludes treaties, pacts, and agreements related to the authorities of the Union Government, and ratifies them after the approval of the Union Council.
- LIII. a) The President is Supreme Commander of the Arab Army; he declares war with the approval of the Union Council. If the Council is dissolved, it will be summoned to meet instantly.
b) The King of Jordan is the Supreme Commander of forces stationed in Jordan.
c) Exercise of command is the authority of the Headquarters of the Arab Army.
d) The President of the Union will appoint, upon recommendation of the Minister of Defence and the Prime Minister, the Chief of Staff of the Arab Army and his assistants, field commanders, division commanders, and others.
e) Military commissions are granted and withdrawn in accordance with the constitutions of the member-States and upon recommendation of the Minister of Defence and the Prime Minister of the Union, in accordance with the Union law of the service of officers. Commissions will be announced in a Union order.
- LIV. The President issues necessary regulations for the execution of laws.
- LV. The law will define the conditions of appointment, salaries, promotion, pension, and other matters related to civil and military officials of the Union Government.
- LVI. If events take place which require immediate attention, the President may issue Union Decrees which shall have

the force of law. These decrees must not violate the Constitution and must be submitted to the Union Council at its first meeting after issuance. If the Council rejects these decrees, they shall be rendered illegal as of the date of rejection, provided that prior agreements made in accordance with the decrees are not affected.

- LVII. All regulations and decrees will be issued with the approval of the Council of Ministers, and must be signed by the Prime Minister and the Ministers concerned.

CHAPTER IV

THE JUDICIAL AUTHORITY

- LVIII. a) A Supreme Court will be formed of a President and six judges three from the Cassation Court of each State or any higher judiciary.
b) The quorum for the Supreme Court shall consist of five judges, including the President.
c) The Supreme Court issues its verdicts by absolute majority.
d) The Supreme Court convenes in the capital of the Union Government.
e) Decisions of the Supreme Court are final; implementation shall be provided by law.
- LIX. The Supreme Court will have the following powers:
a) To try members of the Union Council or Ministers of the Union.
b) To settle disputes which take place between the Government of the Union and one or more of the members, or disputes which might take place among the members.
c) To give legal advice in matters referred by the Prime Minister of the Union.
d) To interpret the Constitution of the Union and other Union laws upon the request of the Prime Minister of the Union.
e) To decide on the constitutionality of Union laws and decrees upon the request of the Prime Minister of

the Union or the Prime Minister of any of the member-States. A decision that a law is unconstitutional will be considered as annulling that law as of the date of the Court decision.

f) To receive appeals on verdicts issued by the courts of the member-States if those verdicts involve a decision in a dispute that affects the articles of this Constitution or any Union law.

g) To receive appeals on verdicts issued by Union courts.

LX. a) The President of the Union, with the approval of the Council of Ministers, appoints the President of the Supreme Court and other members of the Court. They cannot be dismissed.

b) The qualifications of members of the Supreme Court, conditions of their appointment, and all matters related to their service will be defined by law.

LXI. The Union Council can form other Union courts.

CHAPTER V

AUTHORITY OF THE UNION

LXII. a) The following are affairs confined to the Government of the Union:

- 1) Foreign Affairs and diplomatic and consular representation.
- 2) Negotiation of treaties, pacts and international agreements.
- 3) Protection of the States of the Union and preservation of their security.
- 4) Establishment and management of the armed forces under the name of "The Arab Army." No member-State may maintain armed units other than police and internal security forces.
- 5) Organization of the Supreme Defence Council, military service, and military recruitment.
- 6) Customs and customs legislation.
- 7) Coordination of financial and economic policy.

- 8) Currency and financial affairs.
 - 9) Unification of educational policy, programs and curricula.
 - 10) Highways and communications.
 - 11) Any other matter decided by the Union Council by a two-thirds majority to be a Union affair, provided that consent is obtained from the governments of member-States.
 - b) All other affairs and powers will remain under the authority of the member-States.
- LXIII. All Union laws, regulations, orders, decrees, and other decisions issued by Union authorities in accordance with this Constitution will be implemented directly and will be binding on all authorities and individuals in the member-States.

CHAPTER VI

FINANCE

- LXIV. a) Income is to be provided for the Union Government by levy of taxes and fees. The member-States will cede to the Union certain revenues in order that the Union Government may carry out its duties and responsibilities in accordance with the Constitution.
- b) The Kingdom of Iraq will pay eighty percent of the revenue of the budget of the first year of the Union Government; and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will pay twenty percent.
- c) After the expiry of the first fiscal year, paragraph (a) above will be applied. If this revenue is not realized, the Union has the right then to levy the dues it finds appropriate for the expenditure of the Union from the revenues of the member-States.
- LXV. The revenues and expenditures of the Union will be organized in an annual budget to be ratified by law before the next fiscal year which begins on the first of April annually.

- LXVI. No appropriation of expenditure can be spent unless it has been properly included in the budget.
- LXVII. The Union Council will debate the budget chapter by chapter. If the budget has not been approved by the first of April, expenditure will continue on a monthly basis at the rate of one-twelfth of the expenditure of the previous year.
- LXVIII. No amount may be transferred from one chapter to another of the budget, and no amount may be added, reduced, or abolished, except by law.
- LXIX.
 - a) An Accountancy and Audit Bureau is to be formed by law to control the revenues, and expenditure of the Union.
 - b) At the beginning of every ordinary session of the Union Council, the Accountancy and Audit Bureau will present to the Union Council a report containing its views, and a statement of the violations committed within the previous year.
 - c) A law will provide for the immunity of the President of the Accountancy and Audit Bureau.
- LXX. The Government of the Union may own transferable and untransferable properties, manage them, and dispose of them according to law.
- LXXI. All properties, funds, and possessions of the Union are exempted from taxes and fees imposed by laws of member-States.

CHAPTER VII

AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

- LXXII. This Constitution may be amended in the following manner:
 - a) The President of the Union, with the approval of the Council of Ministers, or the Union Council, upon a petition submitted by twenty-one members, may request amendment of the Constitution. The request must state the articles which need amendment and recommend substitute legislation.

b) The Union Council will debate the amendment request and will approve it by a two-thirds majority of its total members.

c) If the Union Council approves, the amendment will be referred to the legislative authorities of the member-States. If the amendment is approved by absolute majority of the National Assemblies of the member-States, it becomes effective after ratification by the President as provided in Article XXXII.

CHAPTER VIII

MISCELLANEOUS

LXXIII. a) In case of a disturbance of public peace in any part of the Union, the President may, in accordance with a decision from the Council of Ministers of the Union, order a state of siege in all parts of the Union or in a certain area. The administration of the areas in a state of siege will be organized in accordance with a special law under which powers will be granted to a person or persons who will be appointed to take necessary measures to restore peace. This person or persons shall have power to suspend ordinary laws. The emergency decree may also provide for trial of persons before special courts.

b) In case of emergency in any part of the Union, or in case of the danger of aggression on the Union, the President of the Union may declare martial law in accordance with decisions issued by the Union Council of Ministers in the area or district affected.

c) Union orders may provide for suspension of ordinary laws or regulations. All officials executing emergency orders will be legally responsible for their actions under these orders unless they are excused by a special law.

d) If one of the member-States declares martial law or a state of siege according to its laws in any part of its territory, the member-State may take any measures according to its laws without consulting the Union Gov-

ernment. The army present in the area will be responsible for carrying out such orders. The Union Government will be informed.

e) If all member-States declare a state of siege or martial law in their countries so that it includes all the Union countries, these acts will be considered an announcement issued by the Union Government. Paragraphs (a) and (b) of this Article are to be applied.

LXXXIV. The Union Government will fix the dates and define the measures necessary to give effect to the transfer of authority from the Governments of the member-States.

LXXXV. The Union Council formed after the issuance of the Constitution will be regarded as the first Union Council. The first session will be considered an Extraordinary Session, and will be adjourned before January 1959 to make way for the first Ordinary Session as provided in Article XIII.

LXXXVI. The first budget of the Union Government will be presented to the Union Council in the Extraordinary Session provided for in Article LXXXV.

LXXXVII. This Constitution will become effective after approval of the National Assembly in each of the member-States and after ratification according to Constitutional procedures.

LXXXVIII. All laws, regulations, and legislation which affect the authorities of the Union and which are law in the member-States when this Constitution becomes effective, will remain valid and effective until abolished, amended or replaced by legislation issued in accordance with this Constitution.

LXXXIX. Every member-State will amend its Constitution to reconcile it with this Constitution.

LXXX. The Council of Ministers of the Union and the Governments of the member-States are requested to carry out the rules of this Constitution.

APPENDIX G

NORTH AFRICAN UNITY

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE TANGIER CONFERENCE FOR THE UNIFICATION OF THE ARAB MAGHRIB

NOTE: This resolution was adopted by the Conference on the Unification of the Arab Maghrib, held from April 27 to April 30, 1958, in Tangier, Morocco.

The text of this resolution may be found in *Statements & Documents* (published by the Embassy of Morocco, Washington, D.C.), Vol. I, No. 3, May 15, 1958; and in *Free Algeria* (published by the Delegation of the Algerian Front of National Liberation), Special Issue on the Tangier Conference, May, 1958.

The Tangier Conference for the Unification of the Arab Maghrib, meeting on 27, 28, 29, and 30 April 1958:

Conscious of expressing the unanimous will of the peoples of the Arab Maghrib to unite their destinies, in the tight solidarity of their interests, and

Convinced that the time has come for them to cement this desire for union within the framework of common institutions in order to

allow them to assume the role incumbent upon them in the community of nations,

DECIDES to work towards the realization of this union;

CONSIDERS the federal form to be the most responsive to the realities of the participating countries; and,

Unto this end, and within a transitory phase,

THE CONFERENCE:

PROPOSES the establishment of an Arab Maghrib Consultative Assembly, emanating from the local National Assemblies of Tunisia and Morocco and from the National Council of the Algerian Revolution. This Assembly shall have the competence to study questions of common interest and to formulate recommendations to the local executive organs;

RECOMMENDS periodic meetings, and other meetings whenever called for by existing circumstances, between the local leaders of the three countries, for consultation on the problems of the Maghrib, and in order to examine the implementation of the recommendations of the Arab Maghrib Consultative Assembly;

RECOMMENDS to the Governments of the countries of the Arab Maghrib not to commit separately the destiny of North Africa, in the fields of foreign affairs and defense, until the establishment of federal institutions.

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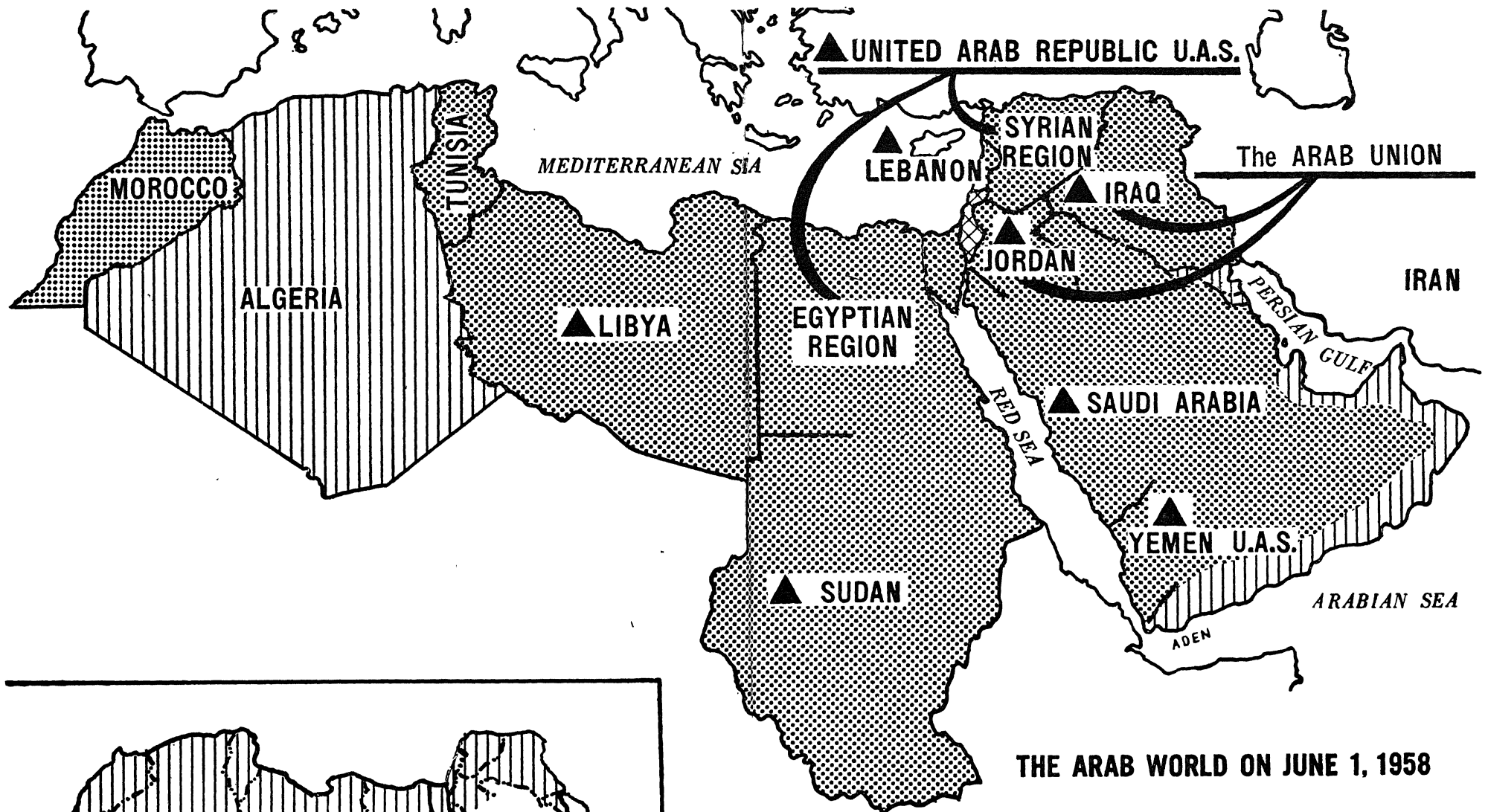
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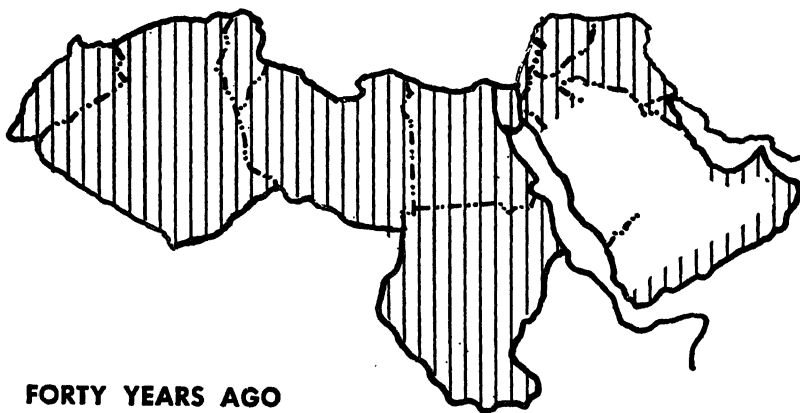


THE ARAB WORLD ON JUNE 1, 1958

- ▤ ARAB STATES
- ▲ ARAB LEAGUE MEMBERS
- |||| FOREIGN CONTROLLED ARAB COUNTRIES
- ▣ ISRAELI-OCCUPIED TERRITORY OF PALESTINE
- U.A.S. = UNITED ARAB STATES

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